BENGAL

DISTRICT

GAZETTEERS

MUZAFFARPUR

BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

MUZAFFARPUR.

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GAZETTEER

OF THE

MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

THE district of Muzaffarpur, the central of the four northern districts of the Patna Division, lies between 25° 29′ and 26° 53′ north latitude and between 84° 53′ and 85° 50′ east longitude. It contains a total area of 3,035 square miles, or a little less than one-seventh of the total area of the Patna Division. The district is much larger than any county in England and Ireland except Yorkshire; its greatest length from north to south is 96 miles, and its greatest breadth from east to west is 48 miles. The principal civil station, which is also the most populous town in the district, is Muzaffarpur, situated in 26° 7′ N. and 85° 24′ E. GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

The district is bounded on the north by the independent State of Nepāl, on the east by the district of Darbhangā, on the south by the river Ganges, which divides it from Patna, on the south-west by the district of Sāran, where the Great Gandak forms a natural boundary, and on the north-west by the district of Champāran. The northern frontier between British territory and Nepāl is defined by ditches and streams, besides masonry and wooden pillars erected at irregular distances. Boundaries.

Muzaffarpur formerly constituted part of the district of Tirhut, a huge unwieldy district extending over 6,343 square miles; but this vast extent of territory being beyond the administrative capacity of a single Collector, it was divided into two in 1875, the eastern portion being formed into the district of Darbhangā and the western and smaller portion being formed into a separate district called Muzaffarpur after the name of its chief town, which was founded by Muzaffar Khān, an *āmil* or revenue officer under the Mughal Government. The name, Tirhut, is still however Origin of name.

used as a convenient appellation for the country included in these two districts, and this name is of considerable antiquity.

General configuration. Muzaffarpur is a vast alluvial plain, intersected by streams flowing for the most part in a south-easterly direction. The country lies on a low level, in many places indented with chains of shallow marshes, which mark the lines of drainage by which the local rainfall and the overflow of the hill streams find their way southwards into the Ganges. The rivers, on the other hand, flow on raised beds, which they have generally constructed for themselves out of the silt brought down from the mountains of Nepāl. The alluvial plain, diversified only by these river ridges, and dotted with groves of mango and clusters of bamboos, is a tract of great fertility, rich in all sorts of crops.

Natural divisions. The Bāghmati and Little Gandak rivers divide the district into three distinct tracts—the area south of the Little Gandak, the *doāb* between the Little Gandak and the Bāghmati, and the tract lying north of the Bāghmati and extending up to the borders of Nepāl. The first tract, which is bounded on the west and south by the Great Gandak and the Ganges, embraces the whole Hājīpur subdivision and a large part of the head-quarters subdivision. It is the richest and most fertile portion of the district, comprising a large block of upland with slight depressions here and there, especially towards the south-east, where there are some lakes, the largest of which is the Tāl Barailā. The second tract between the Little Gandak and the Bāghmati is an area of low-lying land, subject to frequent inundations, to ward off which the Turkī embankment has been constructed. It is the lowest portion of the district, and the shifting courses of the rivers have left long semi-circular lakes in all directions. The third tract comprises nearly half the district, including the whole of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, and stretches in a great marshy plain, traversed at intervals by ridges of upland, from the Bāghmati to the Nepāl frontier.

Scenery. The Muzaffarpur district then is one continuous stretch of rich alluvial plain watered by three principal rivers—the Great Gandak, the Little Gandak and the Bāghmati, with their tributary systems, which during the rains overflow into picturesque lakes or extensive marshy depressions. In some tracts nothing but an enormous stretch of rice-fields meets the eye, but elsewhere numerous groves of mango, bamboo and *sisu* give a pleasing character to the scenery. To the north of the district the Himālayas are distinctly visible on clear mornings in all their distant grandeur; and to the south, especially in the portion of the country adjoining the great rivers, there are numerous marshes formed out of their

abandoned beds, which remain full of water and are often covered with rank vegetation. The greatest of these is the Tāl Barailā, a lake of irregular size extending for several miles in length and breadth. Here the land remains under water for the greater part of the year, and in August and September there is nothing to be seen but a vast sheet of water haunted by myriads of water-fowl.

Roughly speaking, the slope of the country north of an imaginary line drawn from Belsand to Puprī in the Sītāmarhi subdivision is from north to south and below that south-eastward. On the south the great stream of the Ganges rolls on to the sea; on the south-west the Great Gandak forms a natural boundary; and to the north the district is intersected by a series of streams, running diagonally across it from north-west to south-east and connecting with the great boundary rivers. The most important of these are the Bāghmati, the Little Gandak, its tributary the Lakhandai, and the Bayā. The most marked characteristic of the river system is that the rivers flow on ridges elevated above the surrounding country, and each pair of rivers thus encloses a shallow depression, consisting of a series of *chaurs*, or low lands, leading into one another. These are first filled by the local rainfall, when the surplus water passes off from one into another, until its flow is checked by some high ground. Having no other course to take, it breaks into one of the nearest rivers at a point where the banks are low, after the level of the stream has somewhat subsided; and in this way the rivers, although running upon comparatively high ground, become ultimately the receptacles of the drainage of the country, or rather the channels by which it is conveyed into the Ganges. RIVER SYSTEM.

The Ganges forms the southern boundary of the district for about 20 miles from Sikmaripur, near Hājīpur, where the main stream is joined by the Great Gandak, to a point almost due north of the Bakhtiyārpur station on the East Indian Railway. This river is nowhere fordable at any time of the year, and its channel, when clear of sandbanks, is generally about a mile wide. In the rains, however, its breadth is much greater, large expanses of sand, which fringe either bank at other seasons, being then covered with water. These sandbanks are constantly changing, forming, and re-forming, in the most capricious way. The Ganges receives the Great Gandak a little below Hājīpur, but the union of the rivers is locally supposed to take place just opposite that place. When the Ganges rises in flood, it not only overflows the country on its banks, but also forces back the waters of the Gandak, and inundates the land between the Gandak embankments for miles above Hājīpur. The changes in the course of the Ganges are so The Ganges.

numerous as to render any detailed description useless in a few years. Generally speaking, the bank on the Muzaffarpur side is sloping and ill-defined; and, with the exception of Hājīpur, there are no places of any note along it.

The Great Gandak. The Great Gandak, which joins the main stream of the Ganges opposite Patna, is also locally known as the Narāyanī and Sālgrāmi; it has been identified with the Kondochates of the Greek geographers, and, according to Lassen, it is the Sadanīra of the Epics. Rising in the central mountain basin of Nepāl, where its sources are known as the *Sapt Gandakī*, or the country of the seven Gandaks, it first touches the district near the Karnaul indigo factory in the head-quarters subdivision, and then pursues a winding course in a south-easterly direction, as far as Hājīpur, where it falls into the Ganges after a course of 192 miles. At first a snow-fed torrent, the Gandak, soon after its entry into British territory, acquires the character of a deltaic river. It has no tributaries in this portion of its course—in fact the drainage sets not towards it but away from it; its banks are appreciably higher than the surrounding country; and in order to prevent inundations, two series of embankments have been constructed—one, which is the most effective, on the Sāran side, the other along the Muzaffarpur bank, as far as Hājīpur. The latter has been repeatedly overtopped and breached by floods, and enormous tracts of land have been submerged. Like most Indian rivers, the Gandak is continually changing its channel, sandbanks forming one year, and being swept away the next. It is nowhere fordable, is full of rapids and whirlpools, and is navigable with difficulty. In addition to the dangers caused by the rapid current, numerous snags are found; and near Harauli, midway between Hājīpur and Lālganj, there is a large bed of *kankar*, which extends across the river, and so narrows the channel, that boats can only proceed with the utmost caution. The lowest discharge of water into the Ganges towards the end of March is 10,391 cubic feet per second, and the highest recorded flood volume is 266,000 cubic feet per second.

The Bāghmati. The Bāghmati, rising in Nepāl, near Kātmāndu, enters Muzaffarpur district 2 miles north of Dheng station on the Tirhut State Railway, and 17 miles north-west of Sītāmarhi. After its junction with the Lāl Bakyā, it forms the western boundary of the district, flowing in a more or less irregular southerly course for some 30 miles, and then strikes off near Narwa in a south-easterly direction across the district. After the river has turned to the south-east, it flows almost parallel to the Little Gandak, crossing the Darbhangā-Muzaffarpur road at Gaighāti, and leaves the district near Hātha, 20 miles east of Muzaffarpur; it

ultimately joins the Little Gandak above Ruserā in the Darbhangā district. The Bāghmati, being a hill-stream, rises so quickly after heavy rain that its banks are unable to contain the water; and as it runs upon a ridge, it sometimes causes great damage when the bank is once overtopped; a portion of the country north of Muzaffarpur is, however, protected by the Turkī embankment. Both this river and the Little Gandak are very liable to change their courses. In the dry season the Bāghmati is fordable, and in places is not more than knee deep. In the rains, however, the current is very swift, sometimes running 7 miles an hour in the upper reaches during heavy freshets, and there are many snags, which render navigation dangerous. A former bed, known as the old Bāghmati, is still pointed out, extending from Mallai, on the frontier, to Belānpur *ghāt*, about 3½ miles north-west of Kalyā *ghāt*, where it joins the present deep stream. This bed has steep banks, is about 50 yards wide, and carries a good deal of water in the rains, when it occasionally overflows, but in the cold weather it is only about 2 feet deep.

Tributaries of the Bāghmati. The Bāghmati has a number of tributaries, of which the most important are the Lāl Bakyā, the Bhurengi, the Lakhandai, and the Adhwāra or Little Bāghmati. The first tributary is the Lāl Bakyā, which flows in a southern direction and joins the main stream near Adaurī. The next affluent is the Bhurengi, which leaves the main stream near Maniāri and rejoins it near Belānpur.

The Lakhandai. Another tributary is the Lakhandai, which rises in Nepāl, and enters Muzaffarpur district at Itharwa, 18 miles north of Sītāmarhi. It is at first a small stream, but after being joined by the Sauran and Bāsiād, it becomes a large navigable river. Flowing south, it passes through Sītāmarhi, where it is spanned by a fine bridge, and continuing in a south-easterly direction, it skirts the indigo factories of Dumrā, Runi Saiyadpur, Ourai and Tehwārā, and joins the Bāghmati 7 or 8 miles south of the Darbhangā-Muzaffarpur road. The river rises and falls quickly, and its current is rapid, especially in the higher reaches, which renders it dangerous for navigation.

The Adhwāra. The next tributary is the Adhwāra or the Little Bāghmati, which flows southwards from Nepāl some 8 miles east from Sītāmarhi. With the Purānadhar Bāghmati, the old bed of the Bāghmati mentioned above, which flows 8 miles to the west of Sītāmarhi, it is invaluable for irrigation in years of drought, when numerous dams are thrown across each stream. Like its parent river, it has several tributary streams. The main stream of the Kamlā joins it near Kamtaul; above that place, near Pālī, a branch goes off towards the west, losing itself in a *chaur* near Rasūlpur; and above Pālī, the Dhaus joins it from the

east and the Jhīm from the west. The Dhaus again is formed by the union of the Bīgī and the Bilauntī; the former flowing from the west, the latter from the east. The Little Bāghmati, after receiving these tributaries, itself falls into the Bāghmati at Haiā Ghāt, about 8 miles south of Darbhangā.

The Little Gandak. The Little Gandak, which is also known as the Harhā, Sikrāna, Burh Gandak or the Muzaffarpur river, rises in Champāran in the Sumeswar range close to the Harhā pass. It enters the district near the village of Ghosewat in the head-quarters subdivision, and flows in a very tortuous direction towards Muzaffarpur 20 miles to the south-east. The latter town stands on its southern bank; and after leaving it, the river still pursues a winding course to the south-east almost parallel to the Bāghmati, passing into the Darbhangā district near Pūsa, 20 miles south-east of Muzaffarpur; it ultimately falls into the Ganges opposite Monghyr. In the hot weather it is fordable in several places, and its banks are high or low, according to the sweep of the current. For purposes of navigation, the Little Gandak is an extremely valuable river. During the rains, boats of 1,000 maunds burthen can easily reach Muzaffarpur, and boats of 500 maunds can reach Marsandi; but the opening of the Tirhut State Railway, which crosses it at Nāgarbastī, has considerably diminished its importance as a trade route. The Little Gandak, like the Bāghmati, is very liable to change its course, and old beds which the stream has now deserted are extremely common, especially from near Muzaffarpur to Motīpur.

The Bayā. The Bayā is a spill channel of the Great Gandak, from which it issues near Sāhibganj, 34 miles north-west of Muzaffarpur. It enters this district near the Karnaul indigo factory, and flowing in a south-easterly direction through it, becomes an important drainage channel with a catchment basin of 800 square miles. In its course through Muzaffarpur it passes the indigo factories of Deoriā, Karnaul, Saraiyā, Bhatauliā, Karhari, and Chhitwārā, and levving the district at Bājitpur, 30 miles south of Muzaffarpur, ultimately empties itself into the Ganges. The head of the stream is apt to silt up, but is at present open. The Bayā is largely fed by drainage from *chaurs*, and attains its greatest flood height when the Gandak and the Ganges are both in flood, being filled by inundation from the former and checked by the high waters of the latter river, which it joins a few miles south of Dalsingh Sarai in the Darbhangā district.

GEOLOGY. The soil of the district is entirely alluvial. It is impregnated in parts with saltpetre and other salts, and occasionally beds of *kānkar* or nodular limestone of an inferior quality are met with.

"The essential features," writes Major D. Prain, I.M.S., in "Bengal Plants", "of the vegetation in the area to the north of the Ganges, from the Gandak on the west to the Brahmaputra on the east, as we pass from north to south, are as follows. First, a narrow, more or less sloping, gravelly submontane tract along the base of the Himalaya, covered, except along river-beds, with a dense forest, the constituent species of which are those that occur on the lower slopes of the mountains themselves. In existing river-beds only a few tough flexible bushes occur; along abandoned shingly river-courses the jungle is open and park-like, and the species are those characteristic of a drier climate than obtains in the forest alongside. This submontane forest is normally succeeded by a belt of swampy land of varying width, covered with long reedy grasses. Further out into the plain the ground as a rule rises somewhat, and, if so high as to be free from inundations, is in waste tracts usually covered with open jungle of a bushy character in the western parts, taller and more park-like in the central districts, and mixed with reedy grass or sometimes consisting only of tall grass as we pass to the east. Much of this tract, however, especially in the west, is under cultivation, and is then bare or diversified with bamboos, palms, and orchards of mangoes, or, less often, groves of other trees; in and about the villages themselves the mangoes are often accompanied by a number of tree-weeds and semi-spontaneous, more or less useful bushes and trees." BOTANY.

For botanical purposes Muzaffarpur forms part of Tirhut, *i.e.*, the region lying from west to east between the Gandak and Kosi, and from north to south between the sub-Himalayan forest and the Ganges, the botanical features of which are in many ways different from those of Bihār, *i.e.*, the tract extending from the Son on the west to the old bed of the Bhāgīrathi on the east, and lying from north to south between the Ganges and the *ghāts* of Chotā Nāgpur. Together they form an integral portion of the Upper Gangetic plain, but, as Major Prain points out, "Tirhut is wholly flat, whereas Bihār is much diversified by hills. Bihār, too, is appreciably drier than Tirhut, and these two circumstances—greater diversity of surface and less humidity—account for the presence in Bihār of many species that are absent from Tirhut. Another and, though an accidental, not less important factor in influencing the vegetation of Tirhut is the density of the population. So close, in consequence, is the tilth, that throughout whole districts field is conterminous with field, and the cultivated land abuts so closely on wayside and water-course as to leave no foothold for those species that form the roadside hedges and fill

the weedy waste places so characteristic of Lower Bengal. Even the village shrubberies that constitute so marked a feature of much of our area, are in Tirhut conspicuous by their absence. The result is that, except for the water-plants in the smaller streams and sluggish rivers, the vegetation of Tirhut is chiefly limited to the crops with their concomitant field-weeds; even the latter are often conspicuous by their paucity."

As regards the different botanical species found in Muzaffarpur, Major Prain has kindly furnished the following account.

The ground is under close cultivation, and besides the crops carries only a few field-weeds, except for a few very small patches of jungle, whereof the chief constituents are the red cotton tree (*Bombax malabaricum*), *khair* (*Acacia Catechu*) and *sisu* (*Dalbergia Sissoo*). In these parts there is an undergrowth of euphorbiaceous and urticaceous shrubs and tree-weeds, like *Breynia*, *Trema*, *Flueggea*, *Phyllanthus* and *Glochidion*. Occasionally also large stretches of grass land are found, of which the chief species are *Eragrostis cynosuroides*, *Andropogon intermedius*, *Imperata arundinacea*, *Saccharum spontaneum*, interspersed with smaller spots of *ūsar* land sparingly beset with *Andropogon aciculatus*, *Diplachne*, *Sporobolus* and similar grasses. Near villages small shrubberies may be found containing mango, *sisu*, *Eugenia Jambolana*, various species of *Ficus*, an occasional tamarind, and a few other semi-spontaneous and more or less useful species. Both the palmyra (*Borassus flabellifer*) and the *khajūr* (*Phœnix sylvestris*) occur, planted and at times self-sown, but neither in great abundance. By the road-sides or round village enclosures, hedges of *Jatropha Curcas*, *Cæsalpinia sepiaria*, *Grewia* and similar shrubs are often covered with climbing species of *Convolvulaceæ*, *Tragia involucrata*, and various species of *Vitis*. Hedge-row weeds are represented by *Jatropha gossypifolia*, *Martynia diandra* and similar plants. The field and road-side weeds include various grasses and sedges, chiefly species of *Panicum* and *Cyperus*; prostrate species of *Evolvulus*, *Indigofera*, *Ionidium*, *Desmodium*; and herbaceous species of *Phyllanthus*, *Euphorbia*, *Heliotropium* and the like. In waste corners and on railway embankments thickets of *sisu*, derived both from seeds and root-suckers, very readily appear. The sluggish streams and ponds are filled with water-weeds, submerged *Ceratophyllum*, *Hydrilla*, *Vallisneria*, *Ottelia*, and floating *Potamogeton*, *Nelumbium*, *Nymphæa*, *Trapa*, *Jussiæa*, *Ipomæa*, the sides being often fringed by reedy grasses and bulrushes occasionally intermixed with tamarisk bushes.

FAUNA.

Tirhut was formerly famous for the number and variety of its fauna in the days when forests covered large stretches of land

which are now under the plough. "The buffaloes", wrote the author of the Ain-i-Akbarī, "are so savage that they will attack a tiger. There are many lakes, and in one of them the water never decreases, and the depth is unfathomable. Groves of mango trees extend to a distance of 20 *kos*, delighting the eye. In the rainy season gazelle, deer and tiger frequent the cultivated spots, and are hunted by the inhabitants. The deer they surround with an enclosure, and take when they please." Even towards the close of the 18th century wild animals were still plentiful. A few years before the Permanent Settlement rewards were paid for the slaughter of 51 tigers in a single year; there was much waste land to the north inhabited by the beasts of prey that cultivation had driven out of the more southern tracts; and the depredations of herds of wild elephants were a serious danger. The advance of cultivation, the growth of the population, and the extension of means of communication have now driven the wild animals, which formerly infested the district, back to the jungles of Nepāl; and there is no jungle left in the district sufficiently large and dense to afford shelter to the larger beasts of prey. Leopards are occasionally found in patches of jungle towards the north of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, but they are only stray visitors from Nepāl. The only other predatory animals met with are the fox and jackal, which are plentiful all over the district. The only representatives of the Ungulata are the *nīlgai* (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) and the wild pig (*Sus cristatus*), both of which are fairly common in the *diāras* and the patches of grass and jungle still left in places. The wild pig is now much scarcer than formerly, but whenever he can be found, he is hunted with the same keenness by the Europeans of the district; and though his kind has decreased in number, he retains the same qualities of cunning, hardihood and courage which make pig-sticking one of the finest sports in the world.

The game birds of the district include many varieties of wild duck and teal, grey-headed and bar-headed geese, snipe, black partridge and quail. Quail appear at the beginning of the cold weather, and are usually found in greatest numbers in December, when the rice is cut, and again in March and April, when the *rabi* crops are harvested. Game birds.

Most of the rivers and tanks abound in fish, such as *rahu*, *tengrā* and *boāri*. Alligators, crocodiles, tortoises and porpoises are common in the Ganges, and are also found to a smaller extent in the Gandak. Fish.

The climate of Muzaffarpur is generally dry, brac[illegible] and healthy. The range of the thermometer is not so great a[illegible] the CLIMATE.

south of the Patna Division; and though the heat is greater than in the deltaic districts of Bengal proper, the dryness of the atmosphere renders its effects less enervating. The year is divided into three well-defined periods—the cold weather, the hot weather, and the rainy season. The first commences early in November, and may be said to last till nearly the end of March; for though the days then begin to be hot, the nights and early mornings continue comparatively cool and fresh. It would be difficult to find a more delightful climate than that which Muzaffarpur enjoys at this time of the year. The days are bright, warm and invigorating; and, as soon as the sun sets, the temperature falls and a fire is at once a comfort and a necessity. The hot season, commencing early in April, is ushered in by dust-storms and west winds, which often cause the temperature to rise above 97° in the shade. The heat is most intense in May, and unless broken by frequent rain, continues to increase until the gathering clouds herald the approach of the rainy season. In an exceptional year, the wind may blow steadily from the east during the hot weather, but such seasons, though cool, are not healthy. The west winds, on the other hand, though they parch up vegetation and raise immense clouds of dust, are a boon to the inhabitants, as the interior of the houses can be kept cool by means of screens of moistened scented grass (*khaskhas tattis*); these are placed at the windows and doors, and kept constantly wet, so that the hot wind blows into the house cooled and tempered. About the middle of June is the usual date for the commencement of the rains. Sometimes a few days' downpour is succeeded by a week or ten days of fair weather before the rains really break. This first outburst is termed the *chhotā barsāt*. The rainy season continues till the end of September or the middle of October, when the saturated ground begins to dry. This is considered to be the most trying season of the year, as the air is hot and steamy, while the sun's rays are still powerful. The temperature then gradually diminishes, and by November the mornings become perceptibly cool.

Temperature and humidity.

In spite of the dry westerly winds experienced in the hot season, the temperature of Muzaffarpur is not excessive. The mean maximum ranges from 73° in January to 97° in April and May and falls to 74° in December; more than half the change taking place in November and December. The mean minimum varies from 49° in January to 79° in June, July and August. Humidity at Muzaffarpur is on an average 67 per cent. of saturation in March, 66 in April and 76 in May, and varies from 84 to 91 per cent. in other months.

During the months from November to May fine dry weather, with an almost entire absence of cloud and rainfall, prevails, and only a fraction of an inch falls monthly. In normal years the monsoon breaks in June, when there are 7·4 inches of rain; the heaviest rainfall occurs in July and August, varying from 12·4 inches in the former to 11·3 inches in the latter month; and the rainfall then decreases to 7·6 inches in September. Cyclonic storms are apt to move northwards into the district in this and the preceding month, and occasionally, though fortunately rarely, there is an excessive local precipitation resulting in inundations. Extreme cases of such rainfall occurred in 1871 when there were 19 inches of rain in 26 hours, in 1884 when 15 inches fell in 48 hours, and in September 1898 when there was a perfect hurricane of wind and rain for 3 days. The annual rainfall varies very greatly. The average for the district in the ten years 1878—87 was 44·70 and in the next decade 49·90 inches, but in the quinquennium ending in 1904 it was only 39·51 inches. Occasionally it rises to a very high figure, and in the year 1871 it aggregated 79·11 inches, of which 35·80 inches fell in September alone—an amount which the total for the whole year has sometimes failed to reach. Rainfall.

Statistics of the rainfall at the various recording stations are given below for the cold weather (November to February), the hot weather (March to May), and the rainy season (June to October). The figures shown are the averages recorded from the earliest year in which rainfall was systematically registered up to the end of 1905:—

Station.	Years recorded.	November to February.	March to May.	June to October.	Annual average.
Muzaffarpur ...	42-45	1·45	3·31	40·85	45·61
Hājīpur ...	29-30	1·58	2·46	41·55	45·59
Mahuwā ...	13-16	1·62	2·74	42·55	46·91
Pāro ...	15-16	1·21	2·76	42·18	46·15
Pupri ...	12-16	1·18	4·04	39·40	44·62
Sheohar ...	14-16	1·74	2·91	39·15	43·80
Sītāmarhi ...	30-31	1·26	4·32	42·88	48·46

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

PREHISTORIC PERIOD.

MUZAFFARPUR, lying on one of the great lines of Aryan immigration, was occupied at an early period by races of Aryan descent, and according to the legend preserved in Vedic literature, it formed part of the country in which the Videhas settled on their migration from the Punjab. The legend relates that Agni, the god of fire, accompanied the Videhas in their march eastwards from the banks of the Saraswatī, and when they came to the broad stream of the Gandak, informed them that their home lay to the east of the river. Thenceforward, the Videhas lived to the east of the Gandak, where they cleared the marshes, cultivated the virgin soil, and founded a great and powerful kingdom. This kingdom was in course of time ruled over by king Janaka, round whose name a halo of legend clings. Under his rule, according to Hindu mythology, the kingdom of Mithilā was the most civilized kingdom in India. His court was a centre of learning and attracted all the most learned men of the time; Vedic literature was enriched by the studies of the scholars who flocked there; his chief priest, Yājnavalka, inaugurated the stupendous task of revising the Yājur Vedas; and the speculations of the monarch himself, enshrined in the sacred works called the Upanishads, are still cherished with veneration by the Hindu community. The centre of this enlightened kingdom was apparently in Tirhut; the capital was Mithilā, which is probably identifiable with Janakpur, a short distance to the north-east of the frontier of Muzaffarpur, the name still preserving the memory of this famous scholar-king; while Sītāmarhi is sacred to Hindu votaries as the site of the miraculous birth of his daughter Sīta.

EARLY HISTORIC PERIOD.

The earliest event, however, which can claim historic reality is the rise of the Vrijjian oligarchical republic, which apparently replaced the old monarchical rule of Videha, while the centre of power shifted from Mithilā to Vaisāli, the modern Basārh in this district. The Vrijjians included eight confederate clans, of whom the Lichchhavis were the most important. The growing

power of the latter brought them into collision with the powerful kingdom of Magadha, the limits of which roughly corresponded at this time with the modern districts of Patna and Gayā. Bimbisāra (*cir.* 519 B. C.), the founder of the Magadhan imperial power, had strengthened his position by matrimonial alliances with the more powerful of the neighbouring States, taking one consort from the royal family of Kosala, a kingdom to the west of Tirhut, and another from the influential Lichchhavi clan at Vaisāli. His murder by his son, Ajātasatru, involved the parricide in war with the aged king of Kosala, whose sister, the queen of the murdered Bimbisāra, is said to have died of grief. This war ending with the complete victory of Ajātasatru, his ambition next induced him to undertake the conquest of the country now known as Tirhut, in which the Lichchhavi clan occupied a prominent position (*cir.* 490 B. C.). The invasion was successful; the Lichchhavi capital, Vaisāli, was occupied; and Ajātasatru became master of Tirhut. It is probable* that the invader carried his victorious arms to their natural limit, the foot of the mountains, and that from this time the whole country between the Ganges and the Himālayas became subject, more or less directly, to the suzerainty of Magadha. From this time too dates the foundation of Pātaliputra (Patna), as the victor erected a fortress at the village of Pātali on the Ganges to curb his Lichchhavi opponents; and the foundations of a city nestling under the shelter of the fortress were laid by his grandson Udaya (*cir.* 434 B. C.).

Jainism.

At the very dawn then of Indian history we catch glimpses of Muzaffarpur as the home of the powerful Lichchhavi clan, the capital of which was the splendid city of Vaisāli. Here the religious ferment which so deeply moved the hearts of the dwellers in the Gangetic valley during the sixth century B. C., seems to have centred, and Vaisāli is intimately connected with the life and teachings both of Buddha and of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. Like Buddha, Vardhamāna,† surnamed Mahāvīra, who erected the fabric of the Jain system upon the foundation laid by Pārsvanātha, was of high aristocratic descent, as his father Siddhārtha was the head of the Nāta or Nāya clan of Kshattriyas who were settled in the Kollāga suburb of the flourishing town of Vaisāli: Mahāvīra is consequently occasionally called the Vesaliya or the man of Vaisāli, and in the books of the rival order of the Buddhists he is designated the Nātaputta, *i. e.*, the son of the Nāta clan of Kshattriyas. Vaisāli consisted of three distinct

* Early History of India, by V. A. Smith.

† Jainism and Buddhism, by Dr. Hœrnle, Calcutta Review, April 1898.

portions, called Vaisāli, Kuṇdagāma, and Vaniyagāma, which formed in the main the quarters inhabited by the Brāhman, Kshattriya and Baniyā castes respectively; at the present day it has entirely disappeared, but the sites of its three component parts are still marked by the villages of Basārh, Basukund, and Baniyā. While it existed, it had a curious political constitution. It was an oligarchic republic, its government being vested in a Senate, composed of the heads of the resident Kshattriya clans, and presided over by an officer who had the title of King and was assisted by a Viceroy and a Commander-in-Chief. Siddhārtha was married to a daughter of Chetāka, the then governing King of the republic; and their son Mahāvīra was born in or about 599 B. C. He was, therefore, a very highly connected personage, which accounts for the fact that, like his rival Buddha, he addressed himself in the earlier years of his ministry chiefly to the members of the aristocracy and to his fellow-castemen, the Kshattriyas. He seems to have lived in the parental house, till his father died, and his elder brother succeeded to what principality they owned. Then, at the age of thirty, with the consent of the head of his house, he entered the spiritual career, which in India, just as in Europe, offered a field for the ambition of younger sons.

In Kollāga, the Nāya clan kept up a *chaitya*, or religious establishment, called Duipalāsa, which doubtless was similar to those existing in the present day, consisting of a park or garden, enclosing a temple and rows of cells for the accommodation of monks. The Duipalāsa *chaitya* was kept up for the accommodation of the monks of Pārsvanātha's order, to whom the Nāya clan professed allegiance; and Mahāvīra, on adopting the monk's vocation, would naturally retire to it and join the order of Pārsvanātha. But the observances of that order do not seem to have satisfied his notions of stringency, one of the cardinal points of which was absolute nudity; and after a trial of one year, he left it, and discarding his clothes, travelled about North and South Bihār. Here in a long wandering life of 42 years, he succeeded in gathering a considerable following of monks, known as the Nigranthas, or men who discarded all social bonds, who after Mahāvīra's death (*cir.* 490 B. C.) became known as the Jains.

Buddhism. About the same time, Buddha was engaged in his ministry in the same tract of country. His first visit to Vaisāli was in answer to the invitation of the inhabitants, who sent a deputation to him, imploring him to deliver them from a frightful pestilence which was desolating their country. Buddha responded to the

call, and coming to Vaisāli drove away the plague and made numerous converts. After this, he revisited the city during the fifth year of his ministry, living in the Kutāgāra or two-storied hall of the Mahāvana, a great forest stretching away to the north of Vaisāli. It was here that he established the Buddhist order of nuns, reluctantly yielding, at the intercession of his cousin. Ananda, to the request of his widowed mother that women might be admitted to the congregation. To Vaisāli again he returned on his journey to Kusināra and to death. The traditional account of this journey states that Buddha travelled leisurely from Pātaliputra to Vaisāli, halting twice on the way—first at Kotigrāma and next at Nadiyagrāma; the first of which was probably* at or close to Hājīpur and the second in the vicinity of Lālganj. After his arrival in the city, Buddha stayed in the mango grove of a famous courtesan named Amrapāli, teaching and exhorting his disciples, and then moved to her house, refusing the subsequent invitation of some grandees of the town. At Vaisāli he spent his last days, expounding the law to Ananda and exhorting his disciples, and then, having foretold his death, passed on to Kusināra.

Though the Lichchhavis had been defeated by Ajātasatru, the powerful Vrijjian confederacy does not appear to have been broken up; and Vaisāli continued to be the centre of political as well as of religious life north of the Ganges. It contained a stūpa erected by the Lichchhavis over some of the relics of Buddha's body, and another enshrining some of the remains of his great disciple, Ananda; it was crowded with Buddhist monasteries; and, according to the account left by Hiuen Tsiang some centuries later, both within and without the city and all round it the sacred places were so numerous that it would be difficult to recount them all. It was here that the second great Council of the Buddhist Church was held, a Council necessitated by the laxity of the Vrijjian monks, who asserted the legality of certain relaxations of the rule of discipline. The Buddhist community became split up into two contending parties—the strict and the lax, and a Council became necessary for the restoration of order. The points in dispute were discussed at this Council, which is said to have consisted of 700 monks; but the local monks failed to convince the assembled brotherhood, and all the relaxations claimed by them were finally prohibited. This second Council,† it has been

* *See* Vaisali, by V. A. Smith, Journal R. A. S., 1902, pp. 267—288.

† Buddhism by Monier Williams. Professor Oldenberg places the date of the Council at 380 B.C.; but the accounts which profess to give its date and the details of its proceedings are very contradictory. See Manual of Indian Buddhism by Kern, pp. 103—109.

said, stands in a relation to Buddhism very similar to that which the Council of Nicaea bears to Christianity.

Visits of Chinese pilgrims.

For several centuries after this we have little record of the history of the district. It continued to form part of the territory of the Lichchhavis, who acknowledged the suzerainty of the Mauryan empire; and Vaisāli, lying as it did on the royal road from Pātaliputra to Nepāl, was visited by Asoka, who enriched it by a stūpa and lion pillar, though on the other hand he is said to have robbed it of part of the sacred relics of Buddha. We know nothing however of its history during the next few centuries, with the exception of a traditional* raid by Kanishka, the Kushan King (*cir.* 120 A. D.), who carried off to Gandhāra the famous alms-bowl of Buddha. It was visited by Fa Hian during his pilgrimage through India in the beginning of the 5th century A.D., but it is not until the visit of Hiuen Tsiang about 635 A.D. that we find any detailed account of the country. He describes the kingdom of Vaisāli as about 1,000 miles (5,000 *li*) in circuit; the soil was rich and fertile; and flowers and fruit were produced in abundance, the mango and plantain being especially plentiful. The climate was agreeable and temperate, the manners of the people were pure and honest, and they loved religion and highly esteemed learning. To the north-east of Vaisāli was the Vrijjian kingdom, some 800 miles (4,000 *li*) in circuit, stretching away from east to west in a long narrow strip. The capital, Chansuna (Janakpur ?), was in ruins, and the inhabitants, who were of a quick and hasty temper, were mostly heretics who did not follow the law of Buddha.

Hiuen Tsiang's account of Vaisāli shows that even there Buddhism was on the decline. Heretics and believers were living together; and he found the remains of hundreds of Buddhist monasteries, but only three or four were inhabited, and those sheltered but a few monks. The Jains were numerous, as might be expected in the birthplace of their religion; and Brahmanical Hindus worshipped at more than a score of shrines. The city of Vaisāli itself was about 12 miles (60 or 70 *li*) in circuit, the citadel, or palace precincts, alone extending over nearly a mile, but it was to a great extent in ruins. The buildings were in an advanced state of decay, the forests had been uprooted, and the numerous lakes and ponds had shrunk into offensive swamps. "At every step," he wrote, "commanding sites and old foundations are seen, which the succession of seasons and lapse of years have entirely destroyed."†

* *See* Reports Arch. Surv. India, Vol. XVI, pp. 8—11.
† Beal's Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. II, pp. 66—80.

From the time of Hiuen Tsiang there is practically no historical information regarding North Bihār until the ascendancy of the Pāla dynasty (800—1200 A.D.). At the time of Hiuen Tsiang's visit Muzaffarpur must have formed part of the dominions of Harsha, the powerful ruler of Northern India between 606 and 648 A.D., who exercised a certain amount of control as suzerain over the whole of Bengal as far east as Assam, and possessed full sovereign power over Western and Central Bengal. But after his death, the local Rājās no doubt asserted their independence, and Tirhut was probably under the rule of petty potentates. Early in the ninth century Gopāla, the founder of the Pāla dynasty, became ruler of Bengal, and towards the close of his life (*cir.* 850 A.D.) he extended his power westward over Bihār. In the 11th century Tirhut was wrested from the Pālas by the ambitious kings of Chedi—a tract corresponding to the present Central Provinces; and in 1019 A.D. it acknowledged the sovereignty of Gangeyadeva,* who aimed at attaining paramount power in Northern India. The end of that century witnessed the rise of the power of the Sena kings, who not only wrested their eastern provinces from the Pālas, but also appear to have carried their arms northwards to North Bihār. Mithilā formed the north-western province of the kingdom of the Senas, and their rule in this part of Bihār is still commemorated by the use of the Lakshmana Sena era, the first current year (1119-20 A.D.) of which was apparently the date of either the accession or the coronation of Lakshmana Sena, the last great king of the Sena dynasty. **MEDIÆVAL PERIOD.**

In the beginning of the 13th century the tide of Muhammadan conquest swept over Bihār, but it does not appear to have reached far north of the Ganges; for it is not till the time of Ghiās-ud-dīn Iwas, the Muhammadan Governor of Bengal between 1211 and 1226, that we learn that he carried the banner of Islām into the territories of the Rājā of Tirhut, which had never before been subdued, and compelled him to pay tribute. This appears, however, to have been rather a successful invasion than an effectual conquest of the country; for a local dynasty of Hindu kings was established about this time at Simrāon in the north-east corner of the Champāran district, and these kings succeeded in maintaining their rule over Tirhut for over a century, until the invasion of Tughlak Shāh in 1323 finally put an end to their independence. **MUHAMMADAN PERIOD.**

Of the earlier kings of this dynasty, we have only traditional accounts. Its found[illegible]as one Nāna or Nānyupa Deva, **Simrāon dynasty.**

* Bendall's Histo[illegible] of Nepal, J. A. S. B., Part I, 1903.

who is said to have established himself at Simrāon, and to have eventually subdued the whole of Mithilā and to have overcome the king of Nepāl. Tradition relates that one of his sons reigned in Nepāl, and the other, Ganga Deva, in Mithilā. Here he is credited with having introduced the system of fiscal divisions or *parganas* for the purposes of revenue administration; while a *chaudhri* or headman was appointed in each *pargana* to collect the revenue, and a *panchāyat* was chosen to settle all disputes. Ganga Deva was succeeded by his son Narsingh Deva, who is said to have had a quarrel with his kinsman, the king of Nepāl, the upshot of which was that Mithilā and Nepāl were separated, never to be united again. Rām Singh Deva, who succeeded his father on the throne, was a pious devotee and a firm patron of sacred literature. Under his auspices, several well-known commentaries on the Vedas were compiled; rules were framed for the guidance of Hindus in their religious and social observances; and an officer was appointed in each village to adjudicate upon all questions arising from the working of these new canons of conduct. Various reforms in the system of internal administration are also attributed to this king. In every village a police officer was appointed whose duty it was to make a daily report of all occurrences worthy of note to the *chaudhri* or head revenue-collector of the *pargana;* the latter being assigned, in return for his services, a certain quantity of land, the produce of which was appropriated by him and his heirs in office. To the same period, too, is assigned the rise of the system of *patwārīs* or village accountants, who were, it is said, paid at the rate of Rs. 10 a month from the village funds.

On the death of Rām Singh Deva, his son, Sakti Singh, ascended the throne, but his despotism appears to have offended the nobles, and one of his ministers established a council of seven elders as a check upon the autocratic power of the king. His son Hara Singh Deva, the last of the line, is said to have prepared records of the caste subdivisions of the Brāhmans and Karna Kāyasths within his dominions. Fortunately with this king we are on more certain ground than that of tradition. In 1323 the Emperor Tughlak Shāh led his victorious forces into Tirhut on his march back from the defeat of Bahādur Shāh, the rebellious Governor of Bengal. The fort of Hara Singh was taken, and the king himself fled northwards, and in his turn conquered the valley of Nepāl, though he does not seem to have maintained any effectual authority over it. As Professor Bendall*

* Bendall's History of Nepal, J. A. S. B., Part I, 1903.

says : "Until more evidence is forthcoming, it seems safer to regard Hara Singh and his ancestors, who reigned in Tirhut, Simrāon and also possibly other parts of the Nepāl *Tarai*, as at most titular kings of Nepāl, even if they really claimed sovereignty over the valley of Nepāl at all."

With the flight of Hara Singh, Tirhut became a dependency of the empire of Delhi, and Tughlak Shāh placed it under Kāmesvara Thākur, the founder of the Thākur dynasty, which continued to rule over Tirhut till early in the 16th century. Here, as elsewhere, the Muhammadan conquest passed over the land without sweeping away all the ancient landmarks. In some places the Muhammadans allowed Hindu chiefs to remain undisturbed in their possessions, and in others they appointed new men as ruling chiefs; but, in either case they did not interfere with the internal administration provided that their tribute was paid. So long, therefore, as they acknowledged their submission to the Muhammadans by the payment of an annual tribute, the Hindu rulers of Tirhut were practically independent; but their tenure of power always depended solely on the pleasure of their Muhammadan over-lords. The first of the line, Kāmesvara, was deposed by Firoz Shāh (1353), who gave the empty throne to Bhogisvara, the younger son of Kāmesvara and his own personal friend. Kīrtti Singh, the second in descent from Bhogisvara, was also a younger son, who similarly obtained the principality as a personal favour from the Emperor, as a result of a visit to Delhi.

Thākur dynasty.

The most famous of the whole line, Siva Singh, was not so complaisant. He rebelled in 1402 A. D., and succeeded in establishing his independence, but his triumph was short-lived, as three years afterwards he was conquered by the Musalmāns and carried off to Delhi; while his wife, Lakhimā Thākurānī, accompanied by the poet Vidyāpati, took refuge in Nepāl, and there committed *sati* when no news of her husband had been received for 12 years. The memory of Siva Singh is still preserved among the people, who point to the tank he made at Rājokhari and quote the proverb:—"The tank at Rājokhari is indeed a tank, and all others are puddles. King Siva Singh was indeed a king and all others are princelings." But his chief claim to fame is that he was a royal patron of learning. Not only was his wife, Lakhimā, one of the few learned women of India, but his court was frequented by poets and scholars, such as Vidyāpati and Vāchaspati Misr, of whom Vidyāpati was at once the most famous and the most faithful. In this respect, he was true to the traditions of his house, as like the Senas, who are said to have devoted their efforts to collecting troops of poems rather than

to marshalling armies of soldiers, these Brāhman kings were noted for their encouragement of learning and the fine arts; their courts were said to be the asylum of Sankrit *belles lettres* and philosophy; and they lived immersed in the study of sacred books and poems.*

Muhammadan Governors. Though the northern part of the district was ruled by its native princes, the south was under the direct control of Muhammadan Governors, and the Muhammadan supremacy was far more pronounced. Hājīpur, situated at the confluence of the Gandak with the Ganges, was a position of great strategical importance; it was long the head-quarters of the Governors of the Bengal kings, and was the scene of more than one rebellion. In its neighbourhood the Muhammadan ascendancy was won and maintained through war and convulsion, and the result is that the Musalmāns have left many more traces in this portion of the district than they have in the north. The city was founded by and named after Hājī Ilyās, king of Bengal (1345–58), who invaded and ravaged Tirhut, harried the frontier between the Bengal kingdom and the Delhi empire, and apparently built this fortress to consolidate his conquests. To punish him and check his growing power, Firoz Shāh invaded Tirhut in 1353, following hard after Hājī Ilyās, who retreated to Pandua. The expedition was short and decisive, and after the entire defeat of Hājī Ilyās, the Emperor returned to Delhi, appointing collectors to uphold his authority in Tirhut.

Shortly after this, North Bihār appears to have been annexed by the kings of Jaunpur (*cir*. 1397), and remained subject to them for 100 years. They were then deprived of this outlying portion of their dominions by the Emperor Sikandar Lodī, who conquered Jaunpur, and then in 1499 advanced against Husain Shāh, king of Bengal. A treaty was concluded at Bārh, in which it was agreed that the Emperor should retain Bihār, Tirhut and *Sarkār* Sāran, on condition that he did not invade Bengal; and Sikandar Lodī then swept down upon Tirhut. Unable to face the imperial forces, the Rājā of Tirhut† advanced to meet him, and was allowed to make terms on the payment of a fine amounting to several lakhs of rupees. The treaty between the Emperor and the Bengal king was not long observed, for in the early part of the 16th century Nasrat Shāh (1518—32) invaded Tirhut, put its Rājā to death, and appointed his son-in-law Alā-ud-dīn to be its Governor. He then marched

* *See* Vidyāpati and his Contemporaries, and Some Mediæval Kings of Mithilā, by Dr. Grierson, Indian Antiquary, Vol. XIV, 1885, and Vol. XXVIII, 1899.

† Elliot's History of India, Vol. V, p. 96.

against Hājīpur, and, having subdued the tract of country called after it, placed it in charge of another son-in-law named Makhdum Alam. Shortly afterwards, in 1538, the latter rose in revolt against his brother-in-law, Mahmūd Shāh, and made common cause with the Pathān adventurer, Sher Khān, who was at this time beginning the struggle which finally secured for him the throne of Delhi.

Mahmūd Shāh was the last independent king of Bengal, and after his fall North Bihār formed part of the Delhi empire; but the allegiance of its chieftains was very loose, and they were practically independent. The country had not been fully subjugated, and it was filled with Afghān settlers, whose numbers were swelled by the accession of those Pathāns who had refused to join the service of the Mughals. Accordingly, when Dāūd Khān was raised to the throne of Bengal in 1574, and aspired at complete independence, he found a number of trained soldiers ready to espouse his cause. Akbar sent orders to Khān Khānān to crush the rebel, and directed the Mughal chiefs of the neighbourhood and those Pathāns who had remained loyal to the Mughals, to assist him. Finally, Akbar himself marched to the south to assert his rights, Dāūd Khān holding out against him in Patna and the strong fortress of Hājīpur. A picked force of 3,000 men was sent to attack the fortress, the assault being delivered under the eyes of the Emperor himself, who watched the fight with a telescope from a battery on the bank of the river. The garrison under Fateh Khān fought with the courage of despair; the Imperial troops were repulsed time after time; and it was not until large reinforcements were sent up that the fort was carried by storm. The commandant and the greater part of the garrison were slain, and their heads sent to Dāūd Khān to show the fate which awaited him. With the fall of Patna shortly afterwards, Bihār was lost to Dāūd Khān. It was thenceforward placed under a separate Mughal Governor, and Tirhut was included in the *sūbah* or province thus formed. Those chieftains who had assisted in maintaining the Imperial authority were granted lands and *jāgīrs* in the Hājīpur *sarkār*, and here they settled with their followers. Subsequently, in 1579, when they raised the standard of revolt, Azīm Khān, the successor of Akbar's great finance minister, Todar Mal, who was deputed to quell the incipient rebellion, appears to have bought them off by confirming them in possession of the lands they had hitherto enjoyed and by granting them fresh *jāgīrs*. In this way, a large number of petty Musalmān chiefs with their followers were permanently settled in the south of Muzaffarpur round

Hājīpur. That place however lost its former importance with the transfer of the head-quarters to Patna; Tirhut, deprived of its separate Governor, no longer comes into prominence; and its history for the next few centuries is merged in that of the Province of which it formed part.

EARLY ENGLISH ADMINISTRATION. It passed with the rest of Bihār under British rule in 1764, when the decisive battle of Buxar finally made the British masters of the Lower Provinces of Bengal.* Since that time the history of the district has been confined to the establishment of order and settled government, the growth of cultivation and commerce, and the general advance of civilization. In the early days of British administration, a great part of the country was in a terrible state of lawlessness. The trade routes were infested by robbers, who preyed on the surrounding tenantry; crimes went unpunished; and even high officials were molested. The correspondence in the first 20 years of British rule presents an extraordinary picture of the internal state of the country; the trade routes blocked by gangs of free-booting zamīndārs; large stretches of land lying waste owing to their depredations; the native revenue officers in league with and sharing the booty of these outlaws; blackmail extorted from the servants of the local officers who had occasion to pass up the river, and even the Chief Magistrate himself fired on in order that he might be intimidated into paying an illegal toll; his attempts to arrest the offenders set at naught, and their apprehension not effected until a year later, and then only through the agency of military force. To the south it was reported that the zamīndārs had set authority in defiance and assumed independence from any legal subordination, that the situation of their estates among the jungles and on the banks of the Bāghmati enabled them to keep forces which no person in those parts could repel, and that they managed to maintain them by means of depredations on both sides of the river. To the north matters were no better, as the zamīndārs on the borders of Nepāl, secure in their jungle fastnesses, mocked at the authorities. "They are all to a man," wrote the Judge in 1781, "villains and tyrants, and many of them have long been

* The English had effected a settlement in the district about a century before this. The first English Factory in Bihār was established at Singiā near Lālganj before 1676, and the Chief of the Bihār establishment lived there. They had as yet no factory of their own at Patna, where they lived and hired houses. Singiā is frequently mentioned in the early records of the East India Company during the close of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century as Singee or Singe. The factory was established there, because it was close to the saltpetre ground and removed from the interference of the Governor of Bihār and his subordinates. *See* Early Annals of the English in Bengal, by C R. Wilson, Vol. I, p. 53.

in a state of petty warfare with Government;" and about 10 years later the Collector described them as "almost savages, who never occupied themselves except in hunting." Many of the peasants, unable to bear the constant oppression of these petty tyrants, abandoned their houses and lands and fled to Nepāl, so that "in every village there were several empty houses, and many villages were quite waste."

The Nepalese War.

The difficulties of administration were still further increased by external trouble owing to the incursions of the Nepalese. Attempts to induce the Gurkhas to aid our officers in the suppression of frontier dacoities were fruitless, and all remonstrances against their aggressions were disregarded. The Collector of Tirhut reported that between 1787 and 1813 upwards of 200 villages had been seized by them upon one or other unjustifiable pretext, and in 1815 he was again obliged to report that the zamīndārs complained that, in consequence of the incursions of the Nepalese, who had come down and burnt their villages, and plundered their property, their ryots had in many instances deserted their homes, and they were unable to pay their revenue. When the Nepāl war at last broke out, a large body of troops had to be posted at Majorganj near Mallai, and, a few miles to the north across the frontier, one of the few successful British actions in this part of the country was fought near Barharwā. Here, close on the frontier, a Gurkha outpost had been established under Parsarām Thāpā, and Major Bradshaw, who was in command of the English forces, determined to attack it, preparatory to occupying the whole *Tarai*. Early in the morning of the 25th November 1814, he surprised and carried the post, killing the Gurkha commander and capturing a Gurkha envoy. The *Tarai* was immediately evacuated by the Gurkhas and occupied by the British, Captain Blackney being posted at Samanpur to the north of the district on the extreme right of the line, where he was left with a small force without any supports. Here he was taken completely by surprise at daybreak on the 1st January 1815; the camp was rushed, the tents fired, the sepoys broke and ran in the utmost confusion, and Captain Blackney himself was killed. His grave in the Majorganj cemetery still recalls this small disaster to the British arms.

THE MUTINY.

Since the establishment of peace with Nepāl, the district has enjoyed a tranquillity which was scarcely broken by the disturbances which took place during the Mutiny of 1857.

When the news arrived in June 1857 that Delhi was in the hands of the insurgents, there was considerable uneasiness in the minds of all the English inhabitants of Bihār. Although few mutinous sepoys had returned to their homes in Tirhut, there was

a loud cry for protection from the European community throughout the district, who believed that the *najībs* were not to be trusted, and that the Musalmāns, at least, would rise. Nor was the alarm confined to the Christians, and the better class of natives began to send away their families and valuables as early as the middle of June. About the third week of that month, intelligence reached the Tirhut authorities that Wāris Alī, a police *jamādār*, said to have been of the blood-royal of Delhi, was carrying on an intrigue with certain disaffected Muhammadans in Patna. A young Civilian with four indigo-planters was deputed to arrest the man. He was seized on the 23rd June, and treasonable correspondence being found on him, he was taken to the station and hanged on the 6th July.

On the 31st July Mr. Tayler, the Commissioner of Patna, issued his well-known order regarding the abandonment of out-stations, and as soon as the Collector had left Muzaffarpur, a small detachment of the 12th Irregulars broke out into open mutiny, robbed the Monghyr mail, and plundered the Judge's and Collector's houses. They then attacked the treasury, jail and Government offices, but the police and *najībs* stood to their posts and drove them off, on which they decamped towards Siwān in the district of Sāran. Mr. Lautour, the Collector, on hearing of the outbreak, returned of his own accord from Dinapore to Muzaffarpur, where he found everything quiet and the people ready to welcome the re-establishment of our authority. Honorary Magistrates were appointed from among the indigo-planters, who were authorized to raise small and efficient bodies of police for the protection of their immediate neighbourhood, but no further outbreak took place in the district. Cases of seditious language, however, were common; while danger was also feared from the movements of mutineers in the adjacent parts. A wandering body of them had entered the *Tarai*, north of Purnea, and it was feared that they might descend on Tirhut from Nepāl. At one time intelligence came that they were only 26 miles north-west from Sursand in the Sītāmarhi subdivision. The danger, however, was not great, as the station was now protected by a force of 350 Gurkhas, who had been sent by Jang Bahādur; while a detachment of yeomanry was at Pūsa, ready to move where required. As a further protection, it had been thought desirable to fortify the Collectorate office with a parapet wall, ditches and ramparts. But these defensive preparations were never called into use; the rebels, not finding the sympathy they expected, did not molest the district; and Muzaffarpur remained undisturbed.

In concluding this sketch of the history of the district the following summary of its main features, given by Mr. Stevenson-Moore in his Survey and Settlement Report, may be quoted :— SUMMARY.

"The history of Mithilā does not centre round valiant feats of arms, but round courts engrossed in the luxurious enjoyment of literature and learning. But, while Mithilā's bid for fame does not rest on heroic deeds, it must be duly honoured as the home where the enlightened and learned might always find a generous patron, peace, and safety. Before 1000 B. C. it was the great centre of Hindu learning; from the sixth to the third century before Christ, Vaisāli, a town within its borders, was a Buddhist stronghold; and in the fifth century after the sun of Buddhism had set, Mithilā again springs into notice as the home of Hindu enlightenment. When eventually the first flood of Musalmān invasion, coming down the Ganges, did overspread Bihār, it subsided, leaving Mithilā with Hindu kings still holding courts, where poetry and learning were alone honoured.

"In this country with principalities apparently undisturbed by internal troubles and heedless of external convulsion, with courts devoted to learning and culture, where poets and philosophers lived in honour and affluence, our first impulse is to look for some traces of superior mental development in the mind of the people at large, at least for some grains of enlightenment fallen from the overflowing store of their masters. But the search is in vain, and it is a deplorable reflection on the Hindu social system that in Mithilā, where it reached a high degree of development, its influences on the material and moral condition of the people at large were in the direction, not of amelioration, but of degradation. The priestly and intellectual aristocracy was so predominant that it set itself to suppress any attempt at social or mental emancipation outside its pale; and it was able to attain its object so effectually that at the present day it is in this same ancient centre of learning that ignorant fanaticism is most rampant and religious susceptibilities most inflammable, that the state of the lower classes is most degraded and most depressed, and that the proportion of the illiterate is the greatest. In Hājīpur this ancient social fabric has worn thin. By the position of Hājīpur, close to the Ganges, a great highway traffic, and to Patna, a great centre of trade, and by its strategic importance at the time of the Mughal conquest, it has been subjected to outside influences which could not be resisted. But in Tirhut, a secluded stronghold, away from the beaten paths of ambition and progress, the blighting influence of that former time holds sway, still unimpaired."

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

GROWTH OF POPULATION. Early enumerations.

UNTIL the year 1875 Muzaffarpur formed part of the old district of Tirhut, and no separate enumeration of its inhabitants took place. A rough census of Tirhut was, however, carried out in 1802 by the Collector, who estimated the population to be 2,000,000 persons; and seventy years afterwards, when the first regular census was taken, it was reported to be 4,384,706, though in all probability the real total was nearer 4,500,000, as this first enumeration was wanting in accuracy. In other words, the increase of the population during these 70 years was no less than 125 per cent. or 1·78 per cent. per annum. According to the statistics which have been prepared, it appears that in 1872 the population of Muzaffarpur alone was 2,246,752, and when the next census was taken it had increased to 2,583,404. The growth of the population in these nine years was therefore nearly 15 per cent. or 1·66 per annum; and though, as already indicated, some of the increase is due to the defects of the census of 1872, it is noticeable that this rate of progress closely corresponds to that observed in the seventy years after 1802, especially as the estimate of 2,000,000 then made was probably under the mark, as almost all early estimates of the population were. The Collector accordingly pointed out that, if the people continued to increase at the same rate, they would double their numbers in sixty years; but it is a matter of some satisfaction that the already overcrowded population of the district has not continued to increase with the rapidity then predicted. During the next ten years there was a further increase of only 129,543 or 5·01 per cent., the total number aggregating 2,712,857; and the census of 1901 disclosed only a slight increase of 41,933 or 1·5 per cent., the whole population amounting to 2,754,790 persons.

Census of 1901.

During the preceding ten years the district had been severely tried both by flood, famine and disease. There were crop failures in 1891-92, when relief operations on a small scale had to be undertaken, and in 1896-97 the whole of the district except the southern part of Hājīpur was visited by famine. There were

heavy floods in 1898, which caused considerable damage, and there were epidemics of cholera in 1892, 1894, 1896 and 1900, which carried off more than 76,000 persons. In other respects, however, the public health was fairly good; the floods caused no permanent injury; and, thanks to a succession of good harvests, the effects of the famine were not long felt. By the end of the decade the people had entirely recovered their normal condition; and it is a notable fact that Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā, which suffered most in the famine year, showed the greatest growth of population.

In Muzaffarpur every thāna in the great rice-growing tract north of the Bāghmati, where the stress of famine was greatest, showed a marked increase, while every thāna south of that river lost population. This is at first sight the more remarkable, as the country to the north of the Bāghmati is more marshy than to the south, and its climate is reputed to be less salubrious than the rest of the district; but the explanation appears to be that the increase is largely due to immigration. The population of the former tract has been growing steadily since the time of the first census of 1872; it attracts settlers both from Nepāl and the southern part of the district, and the progress is greatest in the Sītāmarhi and Sheohar thānas which march with the Nepāl frontier. The Sītāmarhi subdivision accordingly showed an increase of 6·73 per cent., while the Hājīpur subdivision, which sustained a slight loss of population in the decade preceding the census of 1891, was practically stationary, in spite of the fact that it is the most fertile part of the district. The head-quarters subdivision, where there was a falling off of 2·3 per cent., was the only decadent portion, the decrease of population in the Muzaffarpur thāna being as high as 5·6 per cent., but here the decrease is due to the fact that it suffered most severely from cholera, and that it is this tract which supplies most of the persons who emigrate to Lower Bengal in search of work. There is a complete railway system within and to the south of this area, which greatly facilitates emigration, and the loss of population is largely due to the exodus of its inhabitants.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS. Density of population.

Although exceeded by the figures for a few individual districts, such as Howrah and Dacca, the portion of North Bihār which comprises the three districts of Sāran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā has a more teeming population than any other tract of equal size in Bengal or Eastern Bengal; and of these three districts the most populous is Muzaffarpur. Here there is the enormous number of 908 persons to the square mile, but the inhabitants are very evenly distributed; only in a small tract to the west does the average

number per square mile fall below 900, while in no part of the district does it exceed 1,000. The density is least in the Pāro thāna with 731 persons to the square mile, and greatest in the Puprī and Sītāmarhi thānas, where it rises as high as 982 and 966 to the square mile. The mean density of the latter thāna has increased by 142 per square mile since 1881, when the pressure of the population, though high, was the lowest in the district. This great growth of population is apparently due almost entirely to immigration both from Nepāl and from other parts of the district.

Migration. From the fact that the proportion of emigrants from Muzaffarpur enumerated during the census of 1901 was 557 and of immigrants 318 per 10,000 of the population, it will be apparent that migration is unusually active, especially as the figures do not include the persons who migrated across the Nepāl frontier, where land is plentiful and rents are low. Altogether 87,700 immigrants and 153,500 emigrants were enumerated, the number of emigrants being thus nearly double that of immigrants. Of the former over 71,000 were born in the contiguous districts, and of the latter 80,700 migrated to those districts, large numbers being attracted by the unoccupied land in the north of Champāran. Muzaffarpur therefore loses slightly by this movement of the population. The immigrants from a distance are fewer in proportion to its population than in any other district of North Bihār, but on the other hand the number of emigrants to distant parts of the Province, or outside it, is exceeded only by those from Sāran, though they are barely one-third as numerous as those from that district. The emigrants go to the metropolitan districts and to Bhāgalpur, Purnea and North Bengal, the general trend of the people being eastward; they are engaged usually in employments involving hard physical labour, such as earthwork and as *pālki*-bearers, while others find employment as shopkeepers, domestic servants, constables, peons and as zamīndārs' *lāthiāls* or club-men.

Towns and villages. Muzaffarpur is distinctively an agricultural district, and of the total population only 3 per cent. live in urban areas, the remainder of the inhabitants congregating in 4,120 villages, the average population per village being 647. There are only 4 towns—Muzaffarpur with a population of 45,617, Hājipur (21,398), Lālganj (11,502), and Sītāmarhi (9,538); but there are twenty-two places with a population of between 5,000 and 10,000, of which the most important are Sursand (9,356), Bariārpur (9,121), Charaut (8,947), Mānikchak (7,739), Akhtā (7,234), Fagwāns (6,836), Anudan Kallān (6,479), Sukchandi (6,176),

and Kānti (5,217). The majority of the people, however, live in villages with a population of 500 to 1,000 or of 1,000 to 2,000 inhabitants. These villages vary greatly in size, ranging from a few acres to 3 square miles, and even to 19 square miles in the *diāra*, but the average area is 431 acres. Generally speaking, the largest are found in the north and the smallest in the south of the district, the average size ranging from 681 acres in Puprī to 296 acres in the Hājīpur thāna.

The rural population is far more progressive than the urban, the mean density per square mile increasing from 736 in 1872 to 847 in 1881, to 888 in 1891, and finally to 903 in 1901, or by 167 in the last 30 years. In the same period the urban population has increased only by 12,128. During the last decade Sītāmarhi was the only progressive town, and Muzaffarpur lost no less than 9 per cent. of its population, though it still contained 3,000 more inhabitants than in 1881. The decrease is, however, to a great extent, more apparent than real, as it was due to the exclusion of one of the old wards from municipal limits and the temporary absence of a large number of people in connection with marriage ceremonies. But for this, it would probably have returned at least as many inhabitants as in 1891.

In common with other Bihār districts, Muzaffarpur has a marked excess of females over males, there being 1,089 females to every 1,000 males—a ratio higher than in any other North Bihār district except Sāran. Sex.

The vernacular current in the district is the dialect of Bihāri Hindī called Maithilī, *i.e.*, the language of Mithilā or the country bounded on the north by the Himālayas, on the south by the Ganges, on the west by the Gandak, and on the east by the river Kosi. The Maithilī spoken in Muzaffarpur is, however, strongly infected by the Bhojpurī spoken in various forms in the adjacent district of Sāran and in the greater part of Champāran. So much is this the case that, as spoken by some people, it is difficult to say whether the dialect is Maithilī or Bhojpurī. This form of Maithilī is classed by Dr. Grierson as Western Maithilī. The language spoken in the north of the district differs somewhat from that spoken in central and south Muzaffarpur, as the latter is still more strongly infected with Bhojpurī. Even in the north, however, the dialect might with equal propriety be classed as a form of Bhojpurī, though the Brāhmans speak a purer form of Maithilī than other castes, and still use the Maithilī alphabet. The language is in a transition LANGUAGE.*

* This sketch of the language of Muzaffarpur is taken from Dr. Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India, Vols. IV and V.

stage, and has been classed by Dr. Grierson in the Linguistic Survey of India as a dialect of Maithilī, because the country where it is spoken belongs historically to the ancient kingdom of Mithilā.

The low caste Musalmāns of Muzaffarpur speak a form of the Awadhī dialect of Eastern Hindī (literally the language of Oudh) which is locally known as the Jolāhā Bolī, as the majority of these Muhammadans belong to the Jolāhā or weaver caste. This dialect is excellent Awadhī with a slight infusion of the local Maithilī and of Hindustānī, and it is estimated that in Muzaffarpur it is used by 204,954 persons. When speaking to Europeans, this dialect is commonly used as a sort of language of politeness by the rustics, who have picked it up from their Musalmān neighbours and imagine it to be the Hindustānī of polite society.

Written character. No less than three different alphabets are in use in the tract in which Maithilī is spoken. The Maithilī character proper, which is closely akin to the Bengali, is that used by Maithil Brāhmans, and the character which is used by all the other castes is the Kaithī. The Devanāgarī character is used by a few of the educated classes, and is understood and read by all persons who pretend to a liberal education; besides this, the Urdū character is employed by the better educated Muhammadans.

Literature. Maithilī is the only one of the Bihāri dialects which has a literary history. For centuries the Pandits of Mithilā have been famous for their learning, and more than one Sanskrit work of authority has been written by them. One of the few learned women of India whose name has come down to us, was Lakhimā Thākurānī, who, according to tradition, lived in the middle of the 15th century A. D. Nor was the field of vernacular literature neglected. The earliest vernacular writer of whom we have any record was the celebrated Vidyāpati Thakkura, who graced the court of Mahārājā Siva Singh of Sugāon, and flourished about the same time. As a writer of Sanskrit works, he was an author of considerable repute, but it is upon his dainty songs in the vernacular that his fame chiefly rests. He was the first of the old master-singers, whose short religious poems, dealing principally with Rādhā and Krishna, exercised such an important influence on the religious history of Eastern India. His songs were adopted and enthusiastically recited by the celebrated Hindu reformer Chaitanya, who flourished at the beginning of the 16th century; and, through him, they became the house-poetry of the Lower Provinces. Vidyāpati Thakkura or, as he is called in the vernacular, Bidyāpat Thākur, had many imitators in Mithilā itself, of whom we know nothing except the names of the most popular and a few stray verses.

Amongst other writers in Maithilī may be mentioned Manbodh Jhā, who died about the year 1788 A.D. He composed a Haribansa, or poetical life of Krishna, of which ten cantos are still extant, and enjoy great popularity. The drama has had several authors in Mithilā, where the local custom has been to write the body of a play in Sanskrit, but the songs in the vernacular. There has been a remarkable revival of Maithilī literature during the past few years, and at least one author deserving of special note has come to the front, Chandra Jhā, who has shown remarkable literary powers. He has written a *Mithilā-bhāshā Rāmāyana*, and a translation, with an edition of the original Sanskrit text, of the *Purusha-parīkshā* of Vidyāpati Thakkura, both of which will well repay the student by their perusal.

CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE.

Maithilī, with its complex system of verbal conjugation, has been described by Dr. Grierson as the dialect of a nationality which has carried conservatism to the excess of uncouthness. "Mithilā," he writes, "a country with an ancient history, traditions of which it retains to the present day, is a land under the domination of a sept of Brāhmans extraordinarily devoted to the mint, anise, and cummin of the law. For centuries it has been a tract too proud to admit other nationalities to intercourse on equal terms, and has passed through conquest after conquest, from the north, from the east, and from the west, without changing its ancestral peculiarities. The story goes that, at the marriage of Rāma Chandra, the Brāhmans of Mithilā showed the same uncivilised pride which is the characteristic of their descendants of the 19th century. This Brahmanical domination has left ineffaceable marks upon the nature of the rest of the population. Mithilā or Tirhut is one of the most congested parts of India. Its inhabitants increase and multiply and impoverish the earth, nor will they seek other means of life than agriculture, or other lands on which to practise the one art with which they are acquainted."

The character of the people has been profoundly influenced by their geographical isolation. The river Gandak proved in the days of the Muhammadan invasion a curiously strong barrier; and while the countries to the west of the Gandak and south of the Ganges were constantly subjected to the turbulent influences that accompanied the rule of the Mughal dynasty, the country of Mithilā, the modern Tirhut, remained more or less at peace under Hindu kings. The results are obvious to all who are acquainted with the districts of Sāran and Muzaffarpur, even at the present day. Although the inhabitants of the Hājīpur subdivision of Muzaffarpur have naturally assimilated some of

the characteristics of their near neighbours in Patna and Sāran, it is still clear that the people of Muzaffarpur are more backward and less enterprising than the people of Sāran. In the time of the Mutiny the rebels found fighting recruits in Sāran, but none in Muzaffarpur; at the present time the labourers of Sāran go far afield to seek labour, and are to be found even in the furthest corners of Assam, while the labourers of Muzaffarpur leave their own district in far fewer numbers; and, what is perhaps even more noticeable, there is a marked distinction between the dialects in use in Sāran and Muzaffarpur, which the size of the dividing Gandak is insufficient in itself to explain.

RELIGIONS. Hindus and Muhammadans.

Muzaffarpur occupies a somewhat uncommon position in being a district practically free from any religious sect except Hindus, Muhammadans and Christians; the members of all other religions only numbered 15 at the last census. The great bulk of the inhabitants are Hindus, who with a total of 2,416,415 persons account for 87·71 per cent. of the population, and practically all the remainder are Muhammadans (337,641). The Muhammadans conquered Tirhut, but they did not colonize it, and the tide of conquest had little effect in shaking the firm roots which Hinduism had taken in the minds of the people. Islām has accordingly never held a strong position in Tirhut, and the country has always retained its pronounced Hinduism. Even now, though occasional *maulvis* preach the gospel of the Prophet, there is no Musalmān missionary organization, and few converts are made to Islām. The great mass of the people, notably the cultivating class, are still Hindu, and the number of Muhammadans is comparatively small.

Christians.

There are only 719 Christians, of whom 341 are natives. Four Christian missions are at work in the district, all of which have their head-quarters in Muzaffarpur town, viz., the German Evangelical Lutheran Mission, founded in 1840, which maintains a primary school for destitute orphans; the American Methodist Episcopal Missionary Society, which possesses two schools; a branch of the Bettiah Roman Catholic Mission; and an independent lady missionary engaged in zanāna work.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS. Anti-kine-killing agitation.

In recent years the only religious movements of any note occurred in 1893-94, when there was an outburst of religious excitement, which here, as in other parts of Bihār, found expression in the anti-kine-killing agitation, the ploughmen's begging movement, and the tree-daubing mystery. The first movement appears to have been due to the activity of the Gorakshinī Sabhās or associations for the protection of cattle. These societies, the legitimate object of which is the care of diseased, aged, and

otherwise useless cattle, started a crusade against the killing of kine, sent out emissaries to preach their doctrines, and collected subscriptions to further their objects. The relations between Hindus and Muhammadans soon became severely strained, and in various parts the feeling aroused among the former manifested itself in the rescue of cattle from Muhammadans and in objections to their slaughtering cattle and selling the meat. There was however no open act of violence till March 1895, when a serious riot broke out in the village of Mathurāpur in the Sheohar thāna. Here the Hindus, alleging that the Muhammadans intended to sacrifice a calf at the mosque on the occasion of the Id-ul-Fitr, assembled in hundreds from the neighbouring villages and made a savage attack on the small Muhammadan population, of whom a considerable number were seriously wounded. Police officers, who went to investigate, were chased away, and it was not until a strong force was sent to the spot, and a body of additional police quartered on the offending villages, that quiet was restored.

Ploughmen's begging movement.

The ploughmen's begging movement, or, as it should more properly be called, the Mahādeo *pūjā*, was a curious exhibition of religious feeling which occurred soon afterwards. All ploughmen, the story goes, were obliged to give their cattle three days' rest and go round the neighbouring villages begging. With the proceeds three wheaten cakes were prepared—one for the ploughman himself, one for his cattle, while the third had to be buried under their stalls. This penance was performed by the people in consequence of a rumour that it has been imposed by the god Mahādeo to expiate the sin committed by the agricultural community in overworking their cattle. For some time the people continued to carry out, with scrupulous care, the orders which they supposed had been given them by their god. The remarkably elaborate nature of this penance gives reason, however, to suppose that it had been carefully thought out; and its inception and spread among the villagers has been attributed to the efforts of those interested in the Gorakshinī agitation to keep the movement afloat.

The tree-daubing mystery.

Tree-daubing was another widespread movement, the meaning of which afforded many grounds for speculation. By the most reliable reports it commenced about the latter end of February 1894 in the north-east corner of Bihār in the neighbourhood of the Janakpur shrine, which lies across the border in Nepāl. The movement consisted in marking trees with daubs of mud, in which were stuck hairs of different animals, buffaloes' hair and pigs' bristles predominating. It slowly spread through the Gangetic districts, eastwards into Bhāgalpur and Purnea, and westwards through many of the districts of the United Provinces. As an

explanation of the movement, it was suggested at the time that the sign was intended as an advertisement of the shrine of Janakpur; and this view was accepted officially. Others, however, held that the marks originated merely with cattle rubbing themselves against trees. Others again pointed out that it was suspicious that it should follow the Gorakshinī agitation, which was hostile to the administration, and that it was intended to promote some movement antagonistic to British rule.*

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS.

The swarming population of Muzaffarpur is almost entirely agricultural, and the people are singularly dependent for their livelihood on the vicissitudes of the season and the productiveness of the soil. This dependence on the bounty of nature finds expression in several quaint religious festivals, of which the following account is taken from Mr. Stevenson-Moore's Survey and Settlement Report.

Harvest festivals.

With a district in which there is so little irrigation, and where, owing to the natural moisture of the soil in the south and the action of the rivers in the north, so little is ordinarily required, the anxiety with which the whole country watches for the coming of the monsoon, the superstitious panic into which anything abnormal in its conditions drives them, cannot fail to strike the observer. Their feelings find vent in a variety of superstitious practices. Thus it is believed by the vulgar that the cry of a frog is most readily heard by the god of rain. In a year of drought, therefore, the low-caste females of a village assemble in the evening, collect water from the pitchers of five houses, and seize a frog which they put in a small earthen pot, together with water taken from the five pitchers. The pot, with the frog shut in it by an earthen cover, is put in the hollow wooden cup into which the lever used for crushing rice falls. Then the lever is raised with the foot and dropped on to the frog; this barbarously cruel performance being repeated until the frog croaks, which no doubt he does, unless killed with too great suddenness. Meanwhile, the women sing songs in a loud voice about the dearth of water.

The months of Bhādo and Asin (September and October) are marked by many religious observances and ceremonies, because this is the most critical season of the year to the cultivator, when he must have rain. Towards the end of the former month the agriculturists have to observe the fast of *Ananta-brat* in gratitude for the ingathering of the *bhadoi* harvest and in the hope of further prosperity. During the first fortnight of Kuar or Asin, since it is on the rain of this period that a successful harvest of the *aghani* and

* For a fuller discussion of the subject, *see* The Tree-daubing of 1894, Calcutta Review, January 1898.

moisture for the *rabi* depends, they devote much time to religious offerings and oblations to their deceased ancestors. This is followed by *Naurātra* or nine nights of abstinence from worldly enjoyments and devotion to the goddess Durgā. When the *rabi* sowings have been completed and the *Naurātra* is over, there follows a day of universal rejoicing when alms are given to every Brāhman who produces seedlings of barley, which here, as in other districts of Bihār and the Upper Provinces, forms the chief *rabi* crop. Thus is the germination of the *rabi* harvest celebrated.

During Kārtik (October-November), when the paddy harvest is taking ear, many devotional performances are observed, especially by the women and unmarried girls. They bathe before dawn and worship the sun as the producer of rain every morning until *Purnamāsī* or the period of a full moon, when large crowds of the people, both male and female, repair to bathe at the confluence of the Ganges and Gandak, and offer the holy Ganges water to Mahādeo or the Great God. It is then that the famous Sonpur Fair is held. Towards the end of this month the longest of all fasts is observed by the people, especially females, who before breaking it offer sweetmeats, vegetables and cow's milk to the Sun God. Even the pastime of the unmarried girls during this month is marked by a devotional spirit born of the mental suspense pending the arrival of the rice crop to maturity. The game of *sama* and *chako* is played by them during the whole month of Kārtik, by the end of which the *aghani* should be fit for reaping. Bābu Nand Kisore Lāl has given the following description of this popular game:—"All the children and young women go singing together to the fields for the feeding of what are called their 'Sama and Chako.' These are clay images made to personify the agricultural gods. They do this every evening for the whole of the month of Kārtik (October-November), and on the 30th day they take the images to a neighbouring river or pond, and there submerge them. Some take the trouble to go to the river Ganges for the purpose. This is chiefly a female pastime, but the young children of either sex are allowed to take part. No adult male is allowed to be present. Placing the images by turn in several plots (producing paddy, *maruā* and *makai*, &c.), the females make a circle round them and sing songs, dancing round and round. The songs last till late in the night. There are always two images—one representing the male and the other the female god."

When, however, the *rabi* crop is assured, the devotional attitude is abandoned, anxiety is at an end, and on the 1st

of Chait the people celebrate the *Holī* festival, breaking forth in unrestrained and hilarious enjoyment. The vitality which religious observances connected with agriculture still enjoy here, arises no doubt from the almost entire dependence of the agriculturists on the rainfall for their immunity from famine, whose grim visits have been too frequent to be easily forgotten.

Mock marriages of mango-groves. Among Hindus to plant a mango tree is considered a religious act, productive of spiritual benefit, and in this district 88 per cent. of the population is composed of Hindus. The popular belief is that as long as rain-water falls from the leaves of a mango tree, or, in other words, so long as it stands, its planter will, after death, abide in *Swarga* or heaven. In fact, the approach of a mango grove to maturity is celebrated, by even the humblest cultivator, with all the show of a marriage ceremony. When the trees are sufficiently grown to give promise of fruit, the branch of a *bar* (banyan) tree to represent the *bar* or bridegroom is brought and fixed near one of the mango trees in the grove; and both are wrapped round with the same piece of cloth by the owner of the grove and his wife, if alive, in the presence of a Brāhman priest. They then repair to a place of worship erected in the grove, where the Brāhman officiates. The priest, after calling down the blessing of the gods, takes an earthen pitcher in which he places water, a few copper coins, and some *kasaili*. Over the top of the pitcher are placed mango leaves, and resting on them, a country lamp full of *ghī*, which is lighted. To make the symbolical ceremony complete, a bamboo basket containing a bride's belongings and dowry on a miniature scale is provided, and the priest having finished his worship, vermilion, the emblem of completed marriage, is applied to the mango tree, as to a bride. Then a sacrificial fire is set alight, and the owner and his wife go round their grove; the former holding a mango leaf with a silver coin on it, over which a third person accompanying them from time to time sprinkles milk. This ceremony is called *pradakshin*, the ordinary Sanskrit term for going round a sacrificial fire with the right side towards it. The quaintest feature of this ceremony is that a wooden statue of a man, 2 feet in height, is fixed in a corner of the garden to witness the marriage, and is called a *chugla* or backbiter, the idea presumably being to disarm scandal. Needless to say, the ceremony ends with a feast to the priest and other Brāhmans. But the emoluments of the priest who officiates do not end here, for he is usually given one of the trees. The ryot willingly allows to the priest the enjoyment of the fruits, but objects to him cutting the tree down. The priest, on the other hand, owing to the difficulty of watching the fruit

of isolated trees, usually attempts to cut and sell its timber when the tree has attained a sufficient growth, thereby violating the religious faith of the planter. The priest's enjoyment of *Swarga* evidently does not depend on the period during which rain falls from the leaves of his mango tree.

Mock marriages of tanks. Similar ceremonies of marriage are performed in the case of every newly-excavated well and tank. The interesting feature in the marriage of tanks is the flight of the *dudh pion* or the milk-drinker. A small quantity of the milk of every available class of animal is procured. The various kinds are then mixed together, and a Brāhman is induced by a money consideration, which sometimes reaches Rs. 400, to drink the combination. Having drunk it, he runs away to the distance of a mile, the people after him, pelting him with clods of earth. He thus personates the *asuras* or enemies of the gods; and the *jat* or wooden pole, with a *trisūl* or a three-pronged iron spear at its top, fixed in the centre of the tank, is an emblem of the weapon with which Mahādeo fought and overthrew them. It is now, however, popularly believed to be set up for the purpose of counteracting the evil eye.

PRINCIPAL CASTES. The most numerous Hindu castes are the Goālās, Bābhans, Dosādhs, Rājputs, Koiris, Chamārs, and Kurmīs, which all number over 100,000 and account between them for nearly a half of the total population ; while Brāhmans, Dhānuks, Kāndus, Mallāhs, Nuniās, Tāntis and Telis each number between 50,000 and 100,000. Of the Muhammadans, 127,254 are Sheikhs and 85,217 are Jolāhās, while Dhuniās (35,651) and Kunjrās (26,406) are also numerous.

Goālās. By far the most numerous caste is that of the Goālās or Ahīrs, who with a strength of 335,064 form no less than one-eighth of the entire population. Their traditional occupation is that of cowherds, and as such they supply the people with milk, butter and *ghī*. With this they combine agriculture, and a large number have given up pastoral pursuits altogether and are only tillers of the soil. They have an unenviable reputation as cattle-lifters, and sometimes they take to burglary, theft and other offences. The institution of early marriage prevails among them to a remarkable extent, and it is said that marriage contracts are made even before the children are born.

Bābhans. The Bābhans or Bhuinhārs stand next to the Goālās in numerical strength, their number being 200,085. This is one of the most important as well as one of the most interesting castes of the district. Not only are they very numerous, but they hold a high social position, and are notorious for their quarrelsome and litigious disposition. Like the Rājputs, they adopt the names of

Singh and Rāi, and like the Brāhmans they are called Pānde, Misr, Thākur and Tewāri. The caste is commonly regarded as of mixed descent, and various legends are current as to its genesis. According to one account, the Brāhmans on the Nepāl frontier, being unaccompanied by their wives and children, formed connections with women of the Kshattriya caste, and their offspring became Bābhans. Another legend relates that Rājā Siva Singh of Darbhangā performed a great religious sacrifice and invited 100,000 Brāhmans to attend the ceremony. It so happened that the number of Brāhmans assembled fell short of the requisite number by half; in order to make up the number, the Rājā had to get in people of other castes. These men received the same homage as the Brāhmans, and in addition, the sacred thread of the twice-born. This gave umbrage to the genuine Brāhmans, and in order to make a distinction between them, the Rājā gave the people of other castes who partook of the feast the name of Bābhans. Another story is that Rājā Jarāsandha of Magadha, on the occasion of the celebration of a religious festival, invited the Brāhmans to a feast at his palace. The Brāhmans came, but owing to a quarrel with the Rājā, they declined to take the meals which were ready, and went away in a body. The Rājā then got hold of all the people he could find, and entertained them with the food that had been prepared for the Brāhmans. He also gave them the privilege of wearing the *janeo* or sacred thread, as a mark of his resentment at the conduct of the Brāhmans, and thenceforth the men were known as Bābhans as distinguished from the real Brāhmans.

These traditions are not recognized by the Bābhans themselves, who claim to be true Brāhmans. According to their own account, they are pure Brāhmans, and have been recognized as such since time immemorial. They contend that they differ from the rest of the Brāhmans only in having taken to cultivation and given up the principal functions of Brāhmans connected with priestcraft, viz., officiating as priests in religious ceremonies, teaching the Vedas, and receiving alms; and they therefore call themselves Bhuinhār Brāhmans. They claim that, even at the present day, Maithil Brāhmans who secede from their own community are admitted among them on condition that they give up priestly occupations; and they contend that many of their ceremonies are performed in the same manner and style and with the same *mantras* as those of the Brāhmans.

The Bābhans now constitute an entirely separate caste, but it appears very probable that they were originally Brāhmans, and that their degradation from the status of Brāhmans dates back to

the downfall of Buddhism. It has been pointed out that Bābhan is merely the Pālī form of Brāhman, and that the word is often found in Asoka's edicts. It has therefore been conjectured that those now known as Bābhans remained Buddhists after the Brāhmans around them had reverted to Hinduism, and so the Pālī name continued to be applied them; while the synonym Bhuinhār or Bhumihāraka is explained as referring to their having seized the lands attached to the old Buddhist monasteries. In support of this theory, it may be mentioned that in this Province they are practically confined to the area covered by the ancient kingdom of Magadha, which long remained the centre of Buddhism.

The other castes require only a brief notice. The Dosādhs, with an aggregate of 187,182, constitute a very numerous caste at the bottom of the social scale. They are a degraded community of a low type, which is despised by the Hindus generally, and appears to have traces of aboriginal descent. This is confirmed by the main features of the worship of their god Rāhu, as the ceremonies include the sacrifice of pigs and libations of liquor, and generally end in a drunken orgy and a copious consumption of swine's flesh. They support themselves by labour and cultivation, but many of them are notorious thieves, and, apparently on the principle of setting a thief to catch a thief, they long monopolized the post of *chaukīdār* or village watchman. **Dosādhs.**

The Rājputs rank next to the Dosādhs in number, with a strength of 175,629. They are mainly an agricultural people, but many of them may be found serving in the police or as jail warders, peons, and *darwāns*. They are especially numerous in the Hājīpur subdivision, where they aggregate over 62,000 or more than one-twelfth of the inhabitants. **Rājputs.**

The Koiris (147,397) are skilful and industrious cultivators, who are the best tenants to be found in the district. They are a purely agricultural caste, who also work as market gardeners and rear such crops as vegetables, potatoes and chillies; the production of opium in this district is almost entirely due to their labours. **Koiris.**

The Chamārs (136,460) are the tanners of the country; the skins of all cattle dying within their villages are their perquisite, and in return for this privilege they supply and repair the straps of the villagers' plough yokes and provide their neighbours with shoes at a cheap rate. Not unnaturally they have an evil name as cattle-poisoners, and are frequently charged with this nefarious practice. The Chamār is also the village drummer, and his wife is the village midwife. **Chamārs.**

The only other Hindu caste with a strength of over 100,000 is that of the Kurmīs (125,508), who are divided into two sects—the **Kurmis.**

Awadhiyā and the Jaiswār. The former are agriculturists and eschew the personal service which the Jaiswārs follow. The latter moreover have no restrictions regarding the marriage of widows, whereas among the Awadhiyās such marriages are as strictly forbidden as among the higher castes.

Brāhmans. The Brāhmans, with 99,179 representatives, though not so strong numerically, are by far the most important caste owing to their hereditary priestly influence.

The majority belong to the Maithil or Tirhutiyā sub-caste which is divided into five hypergamous groups—Srotriya or Sote, Jog, Pānjibaddh, Nagar and Jaiwār, which take rank in this order. A man of the Srotriya group may take a wife from the lower groups and is usually paid a considerable sum of money for doing so, but he loses in social estimation by the match, and the children of such unions, though higher than the class from which their mothers came, are nevertheless not deemed to be socially equal to the members of their fathers' class. The same rule applies to the other classes in descending order: each may take wives from the groups below it. Great importance is attached to purity of blood, and for this purpose the leading Maithil Brāhmans, with their pandits, their *pānjiārās* or genealogists, and their *ghataks* or marriage-brokers, come together at many places in Tirhut for the purpose of settling disputed questions of caste custom and of arranging marriages.

They maintain one of the most extraordinary series of records in existence called the *Pānj*.* It is composed of an immense number of palm-leaf manuscripts, containing an entry for the birth and marriage of every pure Brāhman in Mithilā, dating back for many hundred years—the *Pānjiārās* say for more than a thousand. These *Pānjiārās*, or hereditary genealogists, go on regular annual tours, entering the names of the Brāhmans born in each village during the past year, as they go along. The names are all entered, as no Brāhman can marry any woman who has not been entered in the *Pānj* and *vice versa*. At certain conjunctions of the heavenly bodies large marriage fairs are held at Saurāth, Mahesī and other places, which are attended by the parents of marriageable children and by these *Pānjiārās*; and after it has been ascertained from the *Pānj* that the parties are not within the forbidden bounds of consanguinity, and that there is no other lawful impediment, the marriage contract takes place.

* *See* Vidyāpati and his Contemporaries, by G. A. Grierson, Indian Antiquary, Vol. XIV, p. 187.

Polygamy is practised among these Brāhmans by the Bikauwā or "vendor"—a class of Maithil Brāhmans who derive their name from the practice of selling themselves, or more rarely their minor sons, to the daughters of the lower groups of the series given above. Some have as many as forty or fifty wives, who live with their own parents and are visited at intervals by their husbands. Bikauwā Brāhmans who have married into the lower classes are not received on equal terms by the members of their own class, but the women whom they marry consider themselves raised by the alliance. The price paid for a Bikauwā varies according to the class to which he belongs and the means of the family of the girl whom he is to marry. It may be as little as Rs. 20: it has been known to rise as high as Rs. 6,000.

CHAPTER IV.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

VITAL STATISTICS.

A comparison of vital statistics for any lengthy periods is rendered impossible by the changes in the system of registering births and deaths which have taken place from time to time. In 1869 the duty of reporting deaths was imposed on the village *chaukīdārs*, and in 1876 the system was extended to births; but the returns received were so incomplete that they were soon discontinued, and, except in the towns, deaths alone were registered until 1892, when the collection of statistics of births as well as of deaths was ordered, and the system now in vogue was introduced.

So far as they can be accepted—and they are sufficiently accurate for the purpose of calculating the approximate growth of the population and of showing the relative healthiness or unhealthiness of different years—the returns submitted since that year show that during the nine years ending in 1900 the population was distinctly progressive, in spite of severe epidemics of cholera and the visitation of famine. The death-rate thrice exceeded the birth-rate, viz., in 1892, 1894 and 1896, when outbreaks of cholera carried off over 56,000 persons, the death-rate (46·70 per mille) in the last year being the highest ever recorded in the district; while in 1897 the people were exposed to the ravages of famine. So far, however, as can be gathered from the returns, there was no loss of life directly attributable to want of food, and the reported deaths fell short of the average of the three preceding years by about 25,000, while the deficiency of births was only 17,000. By the end of 1900 the people had entirely recovered their normal condition; and in spite of a severe epidemic of cholera, which carried off 20,000 persons in 1900, the returns for the nine years 1892—1900 showed an excess of nearly 80,000 births over deaths. Since 1900 there has been a substantial increase of population. The death-rate has been high; but there has been a large increase in the birth-rate, which throughout these years has been above 43 per mille, and in 1904 reached 48·66 per mille—a figure higher than any previously recorded in the district. The result has been that the births reported have exceeded the number of deaths by 121,00, or 41,0000

more than in the preceding nine years. Comparing the figures for the quinquennium 1900—04 with those for the preceding five years, the mortality has risen from 32 to 35 per mille, the average number of deaths per annum being 96,055 as against 88,209 in the previous quinquennium; but, on the other hand, the average number of births annually has increased from 104,858 to 121,603.

PRINCIPAL DISEASES. Fever.

According to the returns submitted year by year, by far the greatest mortality is due to fever, but the ignorant *chaukīdār* responsible for the returns is far from being a medical expert. Drawn as he often is from the lowest dregs of the people, he can diagnose only a few well-known diseases like cholera and small-pox, and many others are indiscriminately classed under the general head of fever. It may, however, safely be assumed that when the mortality ascribed to fever is unusually high, the greater part of the excess is due to malarial affections; and it is noticeable that in six out of the ten years ending in 1904 the average mortality from fever in the district has exceeded that for the Province as a whole. Year by year the number of deaths from fever varies from 50,000 to 70,000; and it has been known to rise to 90,000. This occurred in the unhealthy year 1894, when fever accounted for a mortality of 33·31 per mille out of a total mortality of 44·25 per mille. The lowest death-rate recorded (18·59 per mille) was in 1899, when fever caused only 50,450 deaths.

Regarding the types of fever prevalent in the district, Lieutenant-Colonel Grainger, I.M.S., Civil Surgeon of Muzaffarpur, states that malarial fevers (benign and malignant, tertian and quartan), measles, small-pox, pneumonia and plague prevail. "The malarial fevers are chiefly autumnal in incidence, and are due to infection by the malarial organisms, chiefly through the agency of the *anopheles* mosquito. *Anopheles Rossii* is very common, but it is not largely instrumental in spreading the disease. *Anopheles fluviatilis* is also found in considerable numbers, and this is one of the varieties of *anopheles* which carry the malarial germs. Measles and small-pox generally prevail in the hot months. Plague has for some years appeared in the cold months, and gradually disappeared with the onset of hot weather and dry west winds. Pneumonia is chiefly a disease of the cold weather and early hot weather. The unclassified fevers comprise various forms of febricula, sun-fever, etc."

Plague.

There were a few sporadic cases of bubonic plague in 1900, and next year the disease broke out in epidemic form; but it lasted only for five months, from February to June, and then entirely disappeared from July. In this period it caused a mortality of 1,265, the places most affected being Hājīpur thāna and town,

and the Raghupur outpost. Since then plague has regularly reappeared and levied an annual toll; in 1902 it caused 1,050 deaths, and in 1903 and 1904 the mortality reached nearly 3,000 a year or 1·06 per mille. The town of Hājīpur again suffered heavily, the mortality being 18 per mille in 1903 and reaching the appalling figure of 51 per mille in 1904. Throughout these years the disease has pursued a regular course, decreasing or disappearing entirely in the hot and rainy weather months, reappearing after the rains, and reaching its climax in the cold weather.

Cholera.

After fever, the greatest mortality is caused by cholera, which breaks out every year and occasionally spreads over the district with great virulence. It was responsible for a very heavy death-rate in the years 1892, 1894 and 1896, when the mortality rose to 6·32, 5·16 and 8·78 per mille; and in 1900 there was another outbreak which resulted in a mortality of 7·53 per mille. During each of the three years ending in 1904 there have again been serious epidemics, the average number of deaths amounting to over 10,000 per annum.

Small-pox.

Small-pox also visits the district every year, but its ravages are not very severe, the death-rate due to it never having exceeded 0·70 per mille.

Other diseases and infirmities.

The other diseases most frequently found are dysentery and diarrhœa, skin diseases, worms, goitre, ear diseases, rheumatic affections, and eye diseases. Goitre is unusually common. Apparently, it is due to the fact that the water of some of the rivers, which come down with large quantities of silt from the Himālayas, is heavily impregnated with various salts; and it would seem that goitre is a prevalent disease among the inhabitants of the country watered by the Little Gandak, especially among those living north of the river. Blindness is fairly common, the glare and dust which accompany a hot dry climate appearing to predispose to cataract; at the census of 1901 it was found that the proportion of blind persons among males was 102, and among females 68 out of every 100,000.

Deaf-mutism is unusually prevalent, especially along the course of the Little Gandak and Bāghmati rivers. Altogether 145 males and 78 females out of every 100,000 are deaf-mutes—a proportion surpassed in Bihār only by the adjoining district of Champāran. The head-quarters thāna, which contains the whole course of the Little Gandak in this district and also part of that of the Bāghmati, suffers nearly twice as much from this affliction as any other thāna, and then come Sītāmarhi and Sheohar on the Bāghmati. Insanity is rarer than elsewhere in the Patna Division, only 10 males and 3 females out of every 100,000 being returned as insane in 1901.

SANITATION.

Outside the municipalities proper methods of sanitation are almost unknown. The tendency of the people is towards aggregation, and instead of living in hamlets, each nestling within its own belt of trees, as in Bengal, they cluster in closely-packed villages, usually consisting of a main street with narrow and ill-ventilated side lanes. The sanitary conditions are extremely primitive, while the apathy of the people and the unwholesome habits to which they are rooted render the task of village sanitation on any appreciable scale most difficult. The houses are generally constructed of earth, and even those who can afford to build houses of brick often will not do so, owing to a superstitious belief that brick-built walls tempt the evil eye. These mud huts are constructed from earth dug out of a hole in the immediate vicinity, which in the rains becomes a regular cess-pool covered with rank vegetation and giving out a most offensive smell. The wells from which the people obtain their drinking-water are shamefully neglected, and are often allowed to get into a disgustingly filthy condition. In many instances, they are surrounded by house-drains, a large portion of the contents of which must find its way into the wells by percolation, carrying with them the germs of cholera.

The general disregard of sanitary rules engendered by the conservatism of the people may be gathered from the following remarks of Mr. Stevenson-Moore :—"The village sites are, generally speaking, clusters of thatch-roofed, mud-walled houses with extremely insanitary surroundings. Ventilation is unthought of, and the drainage left to its own care. If windows exist, they are made, at any rate in the zenāna apartments, not more than a couple of feet from the top of the wall, and then very securely latticed, their use for ventilation being thereby, as far as possible, minimised. Brick-built houses, in spite of superstitious prejudices, yearly grow more numerous. They are generally erected by the zamindar class or by *mahājans*, mainly for the better security of their property. To the usual squalor of native habitations, the European planters' bungalow is a pleasant contrast. The residence of the more important planter is a well-built roomy brick house, invariably kept in perfect repair, usually situated picturesquely on the high bank of the winding lake, having on one side grassy lawns running down to the clear water, and surrounded on the other by extensive grounds with artistically-arranged beds of shrubs and flowers, and winding carriage-drives bordered by avenues of *sissu* trees, the whole kept with the most scrupulous care. Yet the Oriental, so receptive in some respects, seems to imbibe hardly that taste for well-ordered and pleasant surroundings inseparable in our opinion from a cultured and

enlightened mind. For the native gentlemen of this district who have profited by the lesson which indigo-planters have brought almost to their doors could be counted on the fingers."

In the municipalities there is an organized system of conservancy; night-soil and other refuse are removed; and steps are taken to protect the sources of water-supply. But none of them have a regular system for the supply of pure water or an adequate scheme of drainage; and like the villages they suffer from crowded and badly aligned blocks of houses intersected by narrow lanes. Owing to the congestion of the population, the mortality from plague, dysentery and cholera is generally greater than in rural areas. In 1904 the death-rate in the municipalities was 54·33 per mille, and in the rest of the district 34·70 per mille, while the average for the preceding five years was 42·71 as compared with 32·75 in rural areas. As an extreme instance of the liability of the municipalities to suffer from such epidemics, it may be mentioned that in 1904 the death-rate in Hājīpur reached the phenomenal figure of 90·70 per mille.

VACCINATION. Formerly there was a strong prejudice to vaccination, and inoculation was prevalent; but the people have learnt to appreciate the protection afforded by the former method, and this prejudice has passed away. Altogether 88,200 persons were successfully vaccinated in 1904-05, or 33·07 per 1,000 of the population; and in the preceding five years protection was afforded to 30·02 per mille. These figures are higher than in any other district of the Patna Division. Statistics of vaccination from 1892-93 to 1901-02 will be found in the Statistical Appendix.

MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS. At the end of 1904 the district contained five public dispensaries, viz., the Maheshwar Charitable Dispensary at Muzaffarpur and four dispensaries at Hājīpur, Runi Saiyadpur, Sītāmarhi and Sursand. Three only of these dispensaries, with 62 beds, had accommodation for in-patients. No other district in Bengal or Eastern Bengal was so badly provided with public medical institutions, as each dispensary had to serve the enormous number of 275,479 persons, or over 100,000 more than in any other district. During the last year however there has been considerable progress, and two new dispensaries have been opened and equipped by the District Board at Pāro and Mahuwā. The Maheshwar Dispensary at Muzaffarpur has also been raised to the status of an hospital, and a fine new building was opened in September 1905 at a cost of a lakh of rupees, mostly raised by subscriptions. This hospital has 7 general wards—5 for males and 2 for females, 4 wards for contagious diseases, and the same number of cottage wards; and it contains 60 beds for males and 20 beds for female patients.

There are also two private dispensaries—one at Baghi in the head-quarters subdivision maintained by a local zamīndār, and the other at Parihar in the Sītāmarhi subdivision maintained by the Darbhangā Rāj; and there are 561 private practitioners, of whom 25 only have diplomas.

The amount expended on the public dispensaries during the five years 1899—1903 was Rs. 64,226, of which Rs. 14,624 or 22·77 per cent. were received from subscriptions—a proportion lower than in any Bihār district except Patna. The total number treated annually at these dispensaries has risen from 55,044 in 1894 to 82,577 in 1904, and the daily average number of patients from 357 to 480. The average number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1904 was a little under 36 per mille of the population. By far the greatest number are treated for skin diseases, and next to that for fever; worms and goitre come next in frequency, followed by ear diseases. Cataract operations are fairly numerous, and during the five years 1896—1900 successful operations of this nature were performed in the case of 218 males and 93 females. During the quinquennium 1900—04 the average daily number of in-patients was 38, the cost of diet being 1½ anna each, and of out-patients 434. Statistics of the daily attendance, indoor and outdoor, during the years 1892—1901 will be found in the Statistical Appendix; and the following tables give a statement of the receipts and expenditure, and of the principal diseases treated in 1905:—

Name of Dispensary.	Number of operations.	Diseases treated.				
		Skin diseases.	Fever.	Worms.	Goitre.	Ear diseases.
Muzaffarpur	1,281	2,785	2,093	1,850	2,181	893
Hājīpur	1,295	1,408	1,352	1,150	980	1,196
Runi Saiyadpur	186	1,613	582	376	52	131
Sītāmarhi	507	4,219	1,510	2,664	2,670	690
Sursand	571	1,371	3,386	1,072	26	923
Total ..	3,840	11,396	8,923	7,112	5,909	3,743

Name of Dispensary.	Receipts.				Expenditure.	
	Government contribution.	District Fund.	Municipal Fund.	Subscriptions and other sources.	Establishment.	Medicines, diet, buildings, etc.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Muzaffarpur	421	3,000	2,250	1,639	3,789	2,833
Hājīpur	119	600	1,320	586	693	1,030
Runi Saiyadpur	14	1,096	...	...	523	587
Sītāmarhi	108	600	360	1,651	1,030	2,216
Sursand	14	...	...	730	576	303
Total ...	676	5,296	3,930	4,606	6,611	6,969

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE.

GENERAL CONDITIONS. It has been explained in Chapter I that Muzaffarpur is an alluvial tract of great natural fertility, which is divided into three natural divisions by the Bāghmati and Little Gandak. The first tract, lying south of the latter river, is the richest and most fertile part of the district. The second tract, lying between the Little Gandak and Bāghmati, is a wide stretch of low-lying *doāb*, which is mainly productive of paddy, though spring (*rabi*) and autumn (*bhadoi*) crops are also raised. The third tract, running from the Bāghmati to the frontier of Nepāl on the north, contains excellent paddy land, and the staple crop is winter rice, besides which good *rabi* and *bhadoi* crops are grown in some portions.

Natural configuration. The first and second tracts may again be subdivided into smaller subdivisions, each of which presents different natural features. The first tract comprises three different portions: (1) The area between the spill channel of the Gogra on the north and the Ganges on the south, which is composed principally of uplands, though part of it is covered by low-lying lands fertilized yearly by the silt deposit of the Ganges. This is probably the most fertile area in the whole district and is especially fitted for the production of *rabi* and *bhadoi* crops. (2) The area between the Gogra and the Bayā, a tract closely resembling that just mentioned, except that it contains some low-lying marshes, the most important of which is the Tāl Khājuri. (3) The tract between the Little Gandak and the Bayā, a vast stretch of upland broken by numerous shallow depressions, and towards the north by a succession of horse-shoe-shaped lakes left by the old beds of the Little Gandak.

The third tract, to the north of the Bāghmati up to the frontier of Nepāl, can roughly be subdivided into the following four portions: (1) The *doāb* between the Lāl Bakyā and the Bāghmati, a stretch of low-lying land, subject to inundations, and yielding mainly paddy. (2) The area between the Bāghmati and Lakhandai. Except in the north-east, where the land is very low and marshy, the greater portion of this part of the country consists of a slightly undulating lowland subject to inundations from

the Bāghmati and its old channel, from the Kolā and the Lakhandai; but as the surplus water is quickly drained off by these rivers, the soil is, as a rule, not water-logged. (3) The belt of country between the Adhwāra and Lakhandai. The northern portion of this tract is exceedingly damp and forms the most unhealthy portion of the district. The remainder is a stretch of undulating upland with marshland here and there, especially towards the east where there are some extensive *chaurs*. (4) The rich plain bounded on the north and east by Nepāl and on the south and west by the river Adhwāra. The northern portion of this tract, which is known as the Pānch Mahala from its containing the five *parganas* of Narga, Dilāwarpur, Pariharpur, Laduāri and Bahādurpur, is perhaps the best paddy-producing tract in Tirhut. It is intersected by a series of mountain streams which fertilize the soil, and the level plain is rich in crops, mango-groves and clusters of bamboos.

The soil consists of alluvium, in which sand and clay are intermixed in varying proportions, and various names are given in different localities to different classes of soil according to the proportion of sand, clay, iron and saline matter they contain. The cultivators recognize a large number of different kinds, but ultimately they may all be grouped under four heads—*balsundrī* (sandy loam), *matiyāri* (clayey soil), *bāngar* (a clayey soil lighter than the latter, containing an admixture of sand), and, lastly, the patches of *ūsar* (containing the salt efflorescence called *reh*) which are found scattered over the district. Soils.

Paddy is grown chiefly on *matiyāri* soil, but it also does well in low-lying *bāngar* land. Good *rabi* crops, viz., wheat, barley, *arhar*, oats, pulses, oil-seeds, and edible roots, grow luxuriantly in *balsundrī* soil; and to this reason may be ascribed the superior fertility of the southern portion of the district. *Bhadoi* crops, especially Indian-corn, which cannot stand too much moisture, also thrive in *balsundrī*, as it quickly absorbs the surplus water. Hence this crop is largely grown in the southern tracts. Indigo does best in *balsundrī*, but *bāngar* is also suitable for it. To the south of the Gandak, *balsundrī* predominates. In the *doāb* between the rivers the soil is chiefly *matiyāri*, while on the north of the Bāghmati *bāngar* predominates to the east and *matiyāri* to the west of the Lakhandai river. The soil known as *ūsar* is distributed in patches all over the three subdivisions.

In some of the northern and eastern tracts of the district, and more especially in a narrow strip of country lying close to the borders of Nepāl, the people are almost wholly dependent upon their unirrigated rice crops, and consequently upon the annual Rainfall.

rainfall. The essential feature of the rainfall is that it should be well distributed and fall in due season. Thus in the Sītāmarhi subdivision, where artificial irrigation is so little used that the crops are absolutely dependent on the natural rainfall for their moisture, heavy rain in June is necessary for both the *bhadoi* and winter rice (*aghani*) crops, and especially for the latter. If a dry period comes too soon, the *aghani* seedlings get burnt up by the sun and never recover. The August rain must be steady, and if there is a failure of moisture too early in September, the rice in the ear cannot form and there will be nothing but husk. If at the end of September or beginning of October the crops do not get sun, they will not ripen, and, on the other hand, if the rain continues, they will rot and be useless. In the case of the *bhadoi* crops also, there must be good rain in June and July for the ploughing and preparing of nurseries, but a dry period is always necessary towards the end of August and beginning of September to ripen the grain, and another dry period is necessary at the time of harvesting about September.

The time of sowing *rabi* is regulated by two circumstances—the heavy rains of the *Hathiyā nakshatra* in the end of September or beginning of October and the approaching cold season. If sown too late, the plants will not be strong enough to resist the cold; if sown too early, the heavy rain will probably drown the seed and sprouting crop, and so necessitate resowing. The cultivators are thus anxious to sow as soon as the heavy rain has ceased. A sufficient supply of moisture is essential at this time in order to enable the seeds to take root, and later on some rain is also necessary to prevent the crop from withering and to mature the ripening grain.

IRRIGATION. The district is well watered and possesses a fertile soil naturally retentive of moisture; it has large expanses of swamp and *jhīl*, and is crossed by numerous streams running diagonally from north-west to south-east, which in the rains flood the country far and wide. The result is that the cultivator has not been driven by necessity to learn the advantages of irrigation; and owing to the natural moisture of the soil in the south and the action of the rivers in the north, little irrigation is ordinarily required. Consequently, the area irrigated is comparatively small, being only 30,000 acres or 2 per cent. of the net cropped area; and were it not that in the Hājīpur thāna 8·6 per cent. of the cultivated area is under irrigation, the district average would be below one per cent. The only other thānas in which the percentage of area irrigated exceeds the district average and also exceeds one per cent. are Mahuwā with 3·2 per cent., Puprī with 3 per

cent., and Muzaffarpur with 2·1 per cent. The percentage is lowest in the Pāro thāna, where irrigation is practically non-existent, the people having the strongest prejudice against it, on the ground that, in the soil they have to deal with, it does positive damage to the crops. This prejudice is not confined to this area, but is fairly general all over the district.

By far the greater part of the irrigation is carried on by means of wells, which supply 63 per cent. of the irrigated area. These are far more common in the south of the district, and it is a noticeable fact that in none of the southern thānas of Hājīpur, Mahuwā, Lālganj, Pāro and Muzaffarpur does the proportion of the irrigated area supplied by wells fall below 78 per cent., while in none of the northern thānas of Sheohar, Sītāmarhi, Puprī, Belsand and Katrā does it exceed 15 per cent. In the latter the number of wells is limited, because the land being low and subject to inundation, wells outside the village site are always in danger of destruction.

In this portion of the district rivers and tanks are the chief sources of supply. The largest percentage (42 per cent.) of the area supplied from the latter to the total irrigated area is in the Sheohar thāna, where the Sheohar Rāj appears to have been instrumental in the excavation of many fine tanks. Elsewhere the rivers are largely used for irrigation, especially in the Puprī thāna, the whole breadth of which is traversed by the Adhwāra river; the other rivers chiefly used for irrigation are the Bayā, Purānadhar Bāghmati, Lakhandai and Mahuwāra. In the tracts watered by these rivers it is the practice for the cultivators to build an embankment across the stream in the dry season, and thus raise the water level until their lands are sufficiently irrigated, when the *bāndh* is cut and the water flows on to be checked by another *bāndh* lower down. *Pains*, or irrigation channels leading off from the banks of the rivers, are sometimes constructed to carry the water to villages at a distance. They are most common in the Muzaffarpur, Puprī, Belsand, Katrā and Sītāmarhi thānas, and supply water to 3·4 per cent. of the irrigated area.

Water-lifts. The methods of drawing and distributing water are those common to the whole of Bihār, and here, as elsewhere, the most usual contrivance for lifting it is the *lāth* or lever. This consists of a beam working on an upright post which serves as a fulcrum; at one end it is weighted with a log, stone or mass of dried mud, and at the other is a rope with a bucket attached, which when not in use rests above the well. When water is required, the cultivator pulls down the rope till the bucket is immersed; as soon

as the tension is relaxed, the weight attached to the lever raises the bucket of itself; and the water is then emptied and led by narrow channels into the fields. Irrigation by means of the *mot* (leather bucket) is much rarer. When this method is employed, water is raised by a large leather bucket secured to a rope, which passes over a rude wooden pulley supported by a forked post, and is fastened to the yoke of a pair of bullocks. These supply the motive power, for as soon as the bucket has been filled, they descend an inclined plane, varying in length with the depth of the well, and thus bring it to the surface. One man is required to look after the bullocks, and another is stationed on the well to let down the *mot* and empty it when it comes to the surface.

Two other water-lifts commonly used are the *karin* and *sair*. The *karin* is a long wooden scoop, made out of a single piece of wood or the trunk of a palm-tree, hollowed out and shaped like one-half of a canoe. The broad open end of this scoop rests on the channel leading to the field, and the pointed closed end is dipped in the water, which is then raised by means of a lever overhead with a weight at the end of it. This machine is used for lifting water from a lower to a higher level, when water is plentiful and the elevation small. The *sair* or *chaur* is used when the quantity of water remaining is small; it is a triangular basket made of bamboo with the edges raised on two sides; cords are attached to each angle, and these are held by two men, one standing on either side of the ditch from which the water has to be raised. Holding the ropes attached to either side, they swing it backwards, and bringing it down sharply into the water, carry the forward motion of the swing through, until the basket, now full of water, is raised to the level of the water-channel, when the contents are poured out.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS. Out of a total area of 3,033 square miles, 2,430 square miles or 80 per cent. are cultivated and 605 square miles or 20 per cent. are uncultivated. The crops grown on the former are usually classed in three great divisions—*aghani*, *bhadoi*, and *rabi*. The *aghani* crops consist mainly of the great winter rice crop which is cut in the month of Aghan (November-December); the *bhadoi* crops are the early or autumn crops reaped in the month of Bhādo (August-September) consisting of 60-days (*sāthi*) rice, *maruā*, Indian-corn, indigo and various millets; while the *rabi* crop, which is so called because it is harvested in the spring (*rabi*), includes such cold-weather crops as wheat, barley, oats, pulses and poppy. The total area cropped in all the three harvests is 2,278,300 acres, of which 723,000 acres are returned as *dofasli* or twice-cropped; and the net cropped area is 1,555,300 acres or 80 per cent. of the

total area of the district. The proportion sown with *bhadoi* is 38 per cent. of the net cropped area, that sown with *aghani* 48 per cent., and that sown with *rabi* 60 per cent., the proportion twice-cropped being as high as 46 per cent. No less than 86 per cent. therefore of the net cropped area is under winter and autumn crops; and as the majority of these crops are sown during the rainy season, the failure of the rainfall in this district, where there are so few means for supplementing it by artificial irrigation, entails heavy loss.

PRINCIPAL CROPS. In the south *bhadoi* and *rabi* crops of a superior kind predominate, and in the north the *aghani* and common kinds of *rabi* crops, with the very striking result that nearly half the total cultivated area in the district carries two crops a year. The prosperity of the southern half of Muzaffarpur can, in fact, be gauged by the *rabi* crops, and that of the northern half by the *aghani* crops. With regard to the proportion of the area under these different crops, it must be remembered that the chief *aghani* crops are sown before the *bhadoi* crops are harvested, and similarly the chief *rabi* crops are sown before the *aghani* is reaped. Hence *aghani* cannot usually be sown as a second crop to *bhadoi*, and where it is predominant, the *rabi* grown consists mainly of the cheapest kind, viz., *khesāri* (*Lathyrus sativus*), which is eaten only by the very poor. In none of the southern thānas is the percentage of the net cropped area under *aghani* crops higher than the district average of 48 per cent., whereas in the northern thānas it greatly exceeds it, ranging from 63 per cent. in Sītāmarhi and Sheohar to 65 per cent. in Belsand and Puprī. The thānas which have the largest area under *aghani* also return the largest area under *rabi*, but as they consist largely of paddy-growing lands, the *rabi* crops are mainly *khesāri*, which is a catch-crop sown after paddy in lands which are unsuitable for the finer kinds of *rabi*. The best *rabi*-producing tracts on the other hand return the lowest proportion of area under those crops, but this apparent anomaly is due to the fact that the figures are less inflated by the addition of those for *khesāri*. Good *bhadoi* and good *rabi* go hand in hand, and where there is a large *bhadoi* area, there is also a large *rabi* area capable of growing the more valuable spring crops. This area is to be found in the south of the district, which, apart from suitability of soil, is better fitted for the production of *bhadoi* crops, because it enjoys greater immunity from early flood; for standing water immediately damages *makai*, the chief *bhadoi* crop, and *maruā* is little less susceptible.

FOOD-CROPS. Altogether 88·5 per cent. of the net cropped area is occupied by food-crops. These crops are grown in the northern thānas to a

larger extent than in the southern thānas; none of the former grow food-crops in less than 91 per cent. of their cropped area, while in none of the latter is the area under them more than 87·34 per cent.; indeed, if allowance is made for the *diāras*, in which valuable non-food-crops, such as indigo and tobacco, are not grown owing to the danger of inundation, it would probably not exceed 81·15 per cent. Rice is grown on 767,800 acres or 49·36 of the net cropped area; while 30·07 per cent. is given up to minor food-grains, including pulses, such as *khesāri*. The latter is largely grown on paddy land when the rice crop has been cut; if the rice crop has been good, it will ordinarily be succeeded by a good *khesāri* crop; but, on the other hand, if the rice crop has failed for want of rain, the *khesāri* crop will be light, even if rain falls subsequently. The same remarks apply to gram, and as little *bhadoi* rice is grown, it will readily be understood what a serious loss the district sustains when, owing to scanty rainfall, the winter crop and its successors fail. Rice is the staple food of the people, and it was the failure of the rice crop which brought about the famines of 1893 and 1897. The proportion of land under rice is greatest in the northern thānas, varying from 63·35 per cent. of the net cropped area in Katrā to over 73 per cent. in Belsand and Sītāmarhi. In the southern thānas rice occupies a smaller proportionate area, varying from 35 per cent. in Pāro to 23 per cent. in Hājīpur, but even here it is more extensively grown than any other single crop.

Rice.

It has been ascertained that no less than 80 different kinds of rice are grown in Muzaffarpur, and only the most intelligent cultivators can identify all the varieties. They may, however, all be grouped under the three main divisions of *aghani*, *bhadoi* and early rice. Of the total area under rice, 658,600 acres or 42·35 per cent. of the net cropped area are under *aghani*, 109,200 acres or 7·01 per cent. are under *bhadoi*, while only 14·20 per cent. of the total rice area grows early rice. The proportion of *bhadoi* rice is lowest in the southern thānas, varying from 4 per cent. in Muzaffarpur to under 1 per cent. in Pāro; and it is largest in the northern thānas, rising to over 11 per cent. of the net cropped area in Sheohar, Sītāmarhi and Belsand, and even to 21·29 per cent. in Katrā.

Transplantation.

Rice is cultivated either by being sown broadcast or by means of transplantation; the latter is the commonest method, and is followed in the case of nearly all the *aghani* or winter rice. The seeds are first sown broadcast after the commencement of the rains in June and July on lands selected for seed nurseries, which have previously been ploughed three or four times. After four or

six weeks, when the young plants are about a foot high, they are generally transplanted; each plant is pulled out from the land, which is soft with standing water, and planted again in rows in flooded fields, in which the soil has been puddled.. The rice is then left to mature, with the aid of water, till towards the end of September. The water is then drained off and the fields are allowed to dry for 15 days, and at the end of that time they are again flooded. It is this practice, known as *nigār*, which makes the rainfall, or failing that, irrigation essential to successful harvest. These late rains (the *hathiyā*) are the most important in the year, as not only are they required to bring the winter crop to maturity, but also to provide moisture for the sowing of the *rabi* crops. Should no rain fall at this period, or if water cannot be procured from artificial sources, the plants will wither and become only fit for fodder; but if seasonable showers fall or if the crop receives artificial irrigation, the rice comes to maturity in November or December.

Broadcast cultivation. Broadcast cultivation is practised in the case of early rice, the long-stemmed *aghani* rice, and some varieties of *bhadoi* paddy. The latter is sown broadcast in June or July; it is regarded as a 60-day crop; and is reaped in August or September. For early rice broadcast sowing takes place from February to June, as the waters in the *chaurs* recede, and the land becomes sufficiently dry for ploughing. The long-stemmed *aghani* rice is grown only on very low land like the Tāl Barailā, and occupies a comparatively small area. After the sowing is over, the land is left in charge of a watchman, who is said to know the field of each ryot better than the ryot himself; and the latter only comes to superintend the sowing. This kind of rice, it is said, attains a height of about 16 feet and grows with the rising water. The rice sown broadcast is always of an inferior kind, and the area thus sown is much smaller than that under transplanted rice.

Other food-grains. The next largest area after rice is returned by other food-grains, including pulses, but excluding wheat, barley, *maruā*, maize and gram, which are mentioned below. The greater part of this area (514,400 acres) is under *khesāri*, which is a *rabi* crop usually sown in rice lands while the paddy straw is standing. Of the remainder, the pulse called *arhar* (*Cajanus indicus*) occupies the largest portion, and is followed by the millets called *kodo* (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*) and *chīna* (*Panicum miliaceum*), the pulses called *mung* (*Phaseolus Mungo*) and *urid* (*Phaseolus Roxburghii*), and other crops such as *masurī* (*Ervum Lens*), *janerā*, peas and oats. Some of these food-grains are *bhadoi* and some *rabi*, but both are generally sown mixed with other crops.

Barley. Next to rice the single crop grown most extensively is barley, which is raised on 19 per cent. of the net cropped area. It is commonly sown as a second crop on fields which have already borne a *bhadoi* crop, and its cultivation is carried on in the same way as that of other *rabi* crops; it is sown in October or November and harvested in March or April. It is grown largely all over the district, but most extensively in the central portion. This and its popularity as an article of food among the lower classes render it a crop of great importance.

Maize. Maize (*makai*) or Indian-corn comes next with 163,760 acres or 10·53 of the net cropped area. It is the most extensively grown of all the *bhadoi* crops, and the lofty bamboo platform (*machān*) erected by the cultivator, to serve as his watch-tower while the harvest is ripening, is a striking feature of the landscape in August and September. It is reaped in the latter month, but for a month before it has to be carefully watched, as crows and jackals are very fond of it. The extent of the growth is in inverse ratio to that of rice. In none of the northern thānas does it cover more than 5 per cent. of the net cropped area, whereas in none of the southern thānas does it occupy less than 13 per cent.:— Puprī, with 2 per cent., returns the smallest, and Hājīpur, with 21 per cent., the largest area under the crop. Like barley, it is the poor man's food, and it forms an important food staple in the south of the district; it is of secondary importance in the north, where rice forms the staple food of all classes.

Maruā. Next to maize the most important *bhadoi* crop is *maruā* (*Eleusine Coracana*), which is raised on 82,450 acres or 5·30 of the net cropped area. It is partly sown broadcast, and partly transplanted; it is harvested in September, and a *rabi* crop is sown in the fields in which it has been grown. The grain is largely consumed by the labouring classes, who convert it into flour and make a coarse bread; and it is chiefly found in the tracts where labour is backward and remunerated chiefly in kind. It is most common in Puprī, where it accounts for 15 per cent. of the net cropped area. It is grown to a less extent in the southern thānas, because the labourers are more advanced, are often paid in cash, and are less easily satisfied, and also because the land is too valuable to be wasted on such an inferior grain.

Wheat. Wheat, with 69,700 acres or 4·48 of the net cropped area, is the most important *rabi* crop after barley. The soil of Muzaffarpur is, on the whole, not suited for its cultivation, but it is grown to a large extent on the *diāra* lands.

Gram. Gram (*Cicer arietinum*) comes last of the important cereals with 43,800 acres or 2·18 of the net cropped area. Like *khesāri*,

it is generally grown as a second crop to winter rice, and is produced most extensively in the northern thānas. It is commonly used in the form of flour known as *sattu*, but, as it is somewhat expensive and tasteless, the flour of inferior grains is mixed with it to give it a flavour.

The non-food-crops, including garden produce and orchards, occupy altogether 11·50 of the net cropped area. With such a teeming population, depending mainly on the soil for its subsistence, the area which can be devoted to such crops is necessarily limited; and, as it is, a considerable proportion of the area is given up to indigo raised by European capitalists. The latter is the most valuable of all the non-food-crops, but it plays such an important part in the rural economy of the district that an account of its cultivation must be deferred to Chapter VIII. NON-FOOD-CROPS.

The most important crop after indigo is sugarcane, the cultivation of which has been extended of recent years owing to the decline of indigo. In earlier days the cultivation of sugarcane was very considerable, and it is a somewhat remarkable fact that many of the indigo concerns were originally started as sugar factories, the manufacture of sugar being given up when indigo proved to be more profitable. The reverse process is now taking place, as indigo is in many places being replaced by sugarcane; and the area under the latter is steadily expanding. In the last settlement operations it was found that the area under sugarcane was only 8,765 acres or ·57 per cent. of the net cropped area, but every year more sugarcane is being grown and the area under the plant has increased to nearly 10,000 acres (1904-05). Sugarcane is now one of the most profitable crops grown in the district in spite of the labour and expense its cultivation entails. It is a crop which not only exhausts the soil, but occupies the ground for a long period, extending over a year. It is planted during February or March, in cuttings of about a foot in length placed in rows about 2 feet apart. When the plant begins to sprout, it is well watered and the surrounding earth is loosened. Each plant grows into a cluster of canes, which are generally ready for cutting in January or February. The crop requires great care, and must have 7 or 8 waterings, even if the other crops have to do without water in consequence. Sugarcane.

Of the other non-food-crops poppy ranks next in importance, as though the area occupied by it (12,180 acres) is not large, the price obtained for the crude opium renders it a very valuable crop. The production of opium is a Government monopoly, and no person is allowed to grow poppy except on account of Government. Opium.

Annual engagements are entered into by the cultivators, who, in consideration of the payment of an advance, agree to cultivate a certain quantity of land with poppy, and to deliver the whole of the opium produced to the Government at a rate fixed according to its consistence, but subject to deductions for inferiority of quality. The best soil for poppy is loam, so situated that it can be highly manured and easily irrigated, and for this reason homestead land is generally selected. The cultivation requires much attention throughout the growth of the plant. From the commencement of the rains in June until October the ground is prepared by repeated ploughings, weedings, and manuring, and the seed is sown in November. Several waterings and weedings are ordinarily necessary before the plant reaches maturity in February. After the plant has flowered, the first process is to remove the petals, which are preserved, to be used afterwards as coverings for the opium cakes. The opium is then collected during the months of February and March, by lancing the capsules in the afternoon with an iron instrument and scraping off the exudation the next morning. In the beginning of April the cultivators bring in their opium to the weighment centres of the different Sub-Agencies, where it is examined and weighed, and the balance due according to the Opium Officer's valuation is paid to them. Final adjustments are made in August after the value of the drug has been ascertained by assay at the Patna Factory, where the final process of preparing the drug in balls or cakes is conducted.

There is a tendency for the cultivation of poppy to decrease, as year by year it is becoming less profitable to the ryots. The plant is delicate; a thoroughly favourable year comes only at uncertain intervals; and the cultivators have had to contend with a number of bad seasons. There is accordingly a marked tendency to withdraw from an industry so precarious and to substitute the more robust cereals or such paying crops as sugarcane, potatoes, chillies and vegetables. This movement has been quickened by the fact that the value of cereals has increased of recent years, while the price paid for the crude drug remains stationary.

Oil-seeds. Oil-seeds occupy 55,000 acres or 3·52 per cent. of the net cropped area, of which 41,000 acres are under linseed and the remainder under other oil-seeds, the chief of which is castor-oil. It is unusual for oil-seeds to be sown singly; linseed is usually mixed with barley, *khesāri*, and other *rabi* crops, while castor-oil is sown mixed with potatoes, turmeric, etc. The cultivation of linseed is mainly confined to *aghani* rice lands, and is therefore most prevalent in the northern thānas.

Oil-seeds are followed by tobacco, which occupies 17,400 acres or 1·12 of the net cropped area. It is grown on an appreciable scale only in some limited tracts on the borders of Darbhangā, but the high price obtained for the produce makes it a very valuable crop, to which the cultivators look to pay their rents, clear off their debts and obtain a few luxuries. The fame of the tobacco of *pargana* Saraisā, in which these tracts fall, has spread far beyond the limits of North Bihār, and purchasers come from distant districts every year and buy large quantities of it. It is largely consumed also in the district, being either smoked in hookahs or chewed with a little lime. Tobacco.

The only other non-food-crops which requires special mention are cotton and the thatching grass called *kharaul*. The latter grows wild, if left undisturbed, and, like sugarcane, shelters hordes of wild pig; when green, it affords fodder to the cattle, and when dry, it is used for thatching. If only cattle are prevented from trespassing, it is as profitable as many of the food-crops. Fibres occupy less than 7,000 acres, of which 6,000 acres are under cotton; it has never been grown extensively in this district and the outturn has never been sufficient for export. Other crops.

One of the most remarkable features of the district is its numerous and extensive mango-groves. They are to be found in almost every village, and altogether cover 4 per cent. of the total area under cultivation. Some of these are of great size, and one grove at Sharīfuddīn, some 12 miles east of Muzaffarpur, covers some 52 *bīghas* of land, and is consequently known as the *Bāwan bīgha gāchhi*. The trees generally are well grown and of uniform size, being planted, with great regard for symmetry, in straight equidistant lines. The mango is the most important of all the local fruits from an economic point of view, as in favourable seasons it forms the chief food of the poorer classes for several weeks. The *mahuā* (*Bassia latifolia*) also supplies large stores of food, the yellow waxy flowers, which fall off the tree in April, being eaten both raw and cooked, and also used for distilling liquor. The fruit is edible, and the seeds yield a valuable oil. The *lichi* (*Niphelium litchi*) gardens of Muzaffarpur are justly famous for the delicious fruit they bear; peaches and limes flourish; and among the other fruits grown with success may be mentioned the *papaya*, plantain, guava, custard-apple, jack-fruit and *bel*. FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.

Among vegetables yams (*aluā*) are very common; with the sweet potatoes called *suthni*, they are the poor man's food. Potatoes are also grown to a considerable extent, especially in the Hājīpur thāna. A large number of other vegetables are raised in

garden plots for household use, and also on a larger scale in the neighbourhood of towns, such as the egg-plant or *baigun* (*Solanum Melongena*), ground-nut (*Trichosanthes dioica*), pumpkins, gourds, radishes, melons and carrots. The favourite condiment is the chilli, which is cultivated extensively.

Extension of Cultivation.

At the end of the 18th century a large proportion of the land appears to have been uncultivated, especially in the northern portion. The state of affairs after the great famine of 1770 can be gathered from the fact that in 1780 the Collector of Tirhut proposed that cultivators should be induced to come from the dominions of the Vizier of Oudh to repeople the barren wastes; while in 1796 he urged the expediency of settling at low rates the waste lands still inhabited by the beasts of prey that cultivation had driven out of the southern tracts. The south was even at this time well cultivated, but in the north there was still much room for the expansion of cultivation.

At the present day, no less than 80 per cent. of the total area of the district is under cultivation, and in the north even this percentage is exceeded. Besides this, 4 per cent. of the total area is occupied by mango-groves, and 10 per cent. is unfit for cultivation. It is evident therefore that there is little or no room for the extension of cultivation, and there are indications that the pressure of the people on the soil is being felt. There is a noticeable tendency for cultivators to cut down the sides of boundaries or to encroach on the borders of roads and patches of was[illegible] there is also a tendency even for lands bearing mango groves t[illegible]rought under tillage; and the competition for land is so ke[illegible]at the smallest plot has grown to be of great importance [illegible] value. Hardly more than one acre out of one hundred bro[illegible]t under the plough is allowed rest even for one year, but fortu[illegible]ely this does not appear to decrease its productiveness, because the rivers almost yearly overflow their banks and fertilize the area which they flood with a rich alluvial deposit.

Improved methods of cultivation.

In these circumstances, it would appear that it is only by superior methods of cultivation that the agricultural resources of the district can be appreciably increased, and fortunately there is ample room for such a change There can, Mr. Stevenson-Moore says, be no comparison between the quality of the cultivation in the north and south of the district. To the north of the Little Gandak the quantity of upland is small, while the low lands are annually flooded and fertilized by the rivers that traverse that area. There is hardly a year in which *khesāri*, at least, cannot be sown broadcast in the still wet paddy-fields, and a catch-crop obtained. There is thus little attempt at high culture, and though

fine crops are obtained, it is mainly through the help of a bountiful nature, and the crops raised are chiefly of the commoner kinds. In the south, which is principally upland, a great variety of crops are raised, but the fertility of the soil is largely aided by the intelligent methods and assiduous care of a skilful and hard-working peasantry. To the same physical differences must be attributed the small proportion of land available for cultivation in the northern thānas, with the exception of Puprī on the borders of Nepāl, where there is a large area used mainly for grazing cattle. Although, therefore, there is less room for the extension of cultivation in the north than in the south of the district, the reclamation of the land still available for cultivation could probably be effected with less difficulty than in the south.

In the same area too there is much more scope for the introduction of better husbandry. So far, however, there appears to be no indication of any progress or improvement in the methods of cultivation. The implements are the same as have been used for generations past, and, except in the lands worked by European capital, no new or improved implements have been adopted, with the exception of the iron roller sugar-pressing machine, invented in 1874 by the proprietors of the Bihiā estate in Shāhābād, and hence known as the Bihiā machine. No greater progress is noticeable in the use of manures, except where indigo is grown and European enterprise has developed the land. The manure mainly used consists of cow-dung and its ashes, which, under a religious ordinance of the country, cannot be turned into cakes for fuel from the Rohinī asterism in the middle of May until the Deo Uthan festival in the beginning of November. The custom is utilitarian, for it enables the peasants to accumulate a stock of manure for the fields at the time when it is most wanted; but unfortunately it is not strictly observed, as the people are driven by necessity to break it. There being no jungle in the district, the supply of fuel is limited, and some persons cherish a convenient belief that the prohibition applies only to the big cakes called *gohrī*, and they accordingly prepare and use for fuel the small cakes called *chipri* and *sohti*. Few crops are manured; the more valuable crops, such as indigo, tobacco, potatoes, poppy and sugarcane, are regularly manured, but of the staple grains wheat only is manured.

Tirhut has always had a high reputation for its cattle, and the East India Company used to obtain draught bullocks from it for the Ordnance Department. The Sītāmarhi subdivision is still the breeding ground from which most of North Bihār is supplied, the Sītāmarhi strain being one of the best in Bengal. It is said, however, that the breed is deteriorating. In the north, CATTLE.

floods destroy large numbers of cattle, and militate against success in breeding; and in the district as a whole, though there is never an absolute lack of food even in the driest season, the want of good pasturage is a serious drawback. There are large grazing grounds in the north, but in the south, and particularly in Hājīpur thāna, where almost all the land is under cultivation, the cattle have to be content with such scanty herbage as the road-sides, tank banks and boundary ridges afford, and are partly stall-fed on chopped rice straw. A large number of bulls and bullocks are maintained for sale and to supply the large cart traffic in the Sītāmarhi subdivision, but on the whole the number of pack-bullocks is not large on account of the extensive railway system. The number of plough cattle is also small, as it is useless for cultivators to keep two ploughs when they have no space to graze two pairs of bullocks. In the south especially, where the rural population is congested and the average holding is small, individual owners can keep few cattle and no attention is paid to systematic breeding. Immature or poor specimens are used by the ordinary cultivator, and though Brāhmanī or dedicated bulls are common, they are generally of little use for stock purposes.

Buffaloes are bred in considerable numbers, and are chiefly valuable for the milk they yield in large quantities. The soil being lighter than in the South Bihār districts, they are generally not used for ploughing. Sheep are reared extensively by the Gareri caste, and their wool is largely used in the manufacture of blankets. Goats are bred in almost every village, especially in localities inhabited by Muhammadans; and pigs of the usual omnivorous kind are kept by the low castes. The only horses are the usual indigenous ponies; they are generally undersized and incapable of much heavy work, but those used for *ekkās* often have astonishing endurance and a great turn of speed.

Veterinary institutions.

Veterinary assistance is afforded at the veterinary dispensaries established at Muzaffarpur and Sītāmarhi, as well as by itinerant Veterinary Assistants. At Sītāmarhi 54 cattle and 42 horses and ponies were admitted as in-patients in 1904-05, and 350 cattle and 102 horses and ponies were treated as out-patients. At Muzaffarpur 44 horses and ponies were treated as in-patients and 139 as out-patients; the corresponding figures for cattle being 32 and 239 respectively. These figures sufficiently attest the popularity of these institutions.

CHAPTER VI.

NATURAL CALAMITIES.

LIABILITY TO FLOODS.

An account of the river system of Muzaffarpur has been given in Chapter I, from which it will be seen that the district is watered by three great rivers, the Great Gandak, the Little Gandak, and the Bāghmati, as well as by a number of minor streams running diagonally across it from north-west to south-east and connecting with its boundary rivers. On the west, separating Muzaffarpur from Sāran and joining the Ganges at Hājīpur, is the snow-fed Gandak, which issues from the mountains in Nepāl. Next to the east is the Little Gandak, which, rising in the lower range of the Nepāl hills near Sumeswar, receives on its left bank numerous streams of various sizes before it enters this district. Further east the Bāghmati, rising near Kātmāndu at an elevation of 4,750 feet, pierces the line of the Nepāl hills, and after entering British territory near Dheng railway station flows between Muzaffarpur and Champāran, and then deflects abruptly to the south-east through the district. In this portion of their course the rivers assume a deltaic character, as their beds, raised by the silt they bring down, are elevated above the level of the surrounding country; and it will thus be understood that a sudden heavy fall of rain over the northern portion of Tirhut, the Nepāl *tarai* and the range of hills to the north of it, some 150 miles in length, may easily cause these narrow drainage channels to overflow their banks. When this happens an inundation inevitably follows, and the lower down one goes, the more is the evil aggravated by the converging of the streams towards the same point, and by the network of private *bāndhs* or embankments that have been made year after year for the protection of the villages along their banks. Not only do they make matters worse for the villages lower down the stream, but in the end, when the floods have asserted themselves and spread over the country, they hedge them in and delay their subsidence. Owing to this combination of circumstances, the district has always been subject to severe and widespread inundations, which cause a great deal of temporary suffering, though on the other hand they do much good by fertilizing the soil and increasing its productive powers.

FLOODS.

Early floods.

In the earliest correspondence of the district during the British era there are clear indications that floods constituted one of the greatest obstacles with which the administration had to contend. No extensive embankments had yet been constructed, and hardly a year passed without the record of some disastrous inundation. In 1785 the district was visited by great floods; in 1787 the country was again inundated; and in 1788 the Collector reported that the country was suffering under complicated calamities of inundation and mortality of cattle, each in a degree never before experienced. *Pargana* Bisara, south-west of the town of Muzaffarpur, was visited by a great inundation in that year, and the Collector estimated that out of 50,000 *bighas* sown with winter crops, 10,000 were damaged, while so many of the cattle died from disease that the cultivation of the remainder was seriously hindered. The terrible effects of these calamities were felt for years afterwards, nor did the bumper crops which followed suffice to restore trade to its equilibrium, to populate deserted marts, or to bring the people back to their abandoned hamlets. To such straits was the Collector driven by these circumstances that in the year 1790 he urged on the Board of Revenue the necessity of attracting those who had fled the country back to their homes, and so restoring the district to its former prosperity. "Along the solitary banks of the streams," he wrote, "scarcely a hamlet is to be seen, and for miles and miles not a human footstep to be traced. *Golahs*, *gunjes*, bazars, *beparis*, manufacturers, the inland trader and the foreign purchaser exist only in imagination. From one town to another, even the high roads, on which the traveller and the merchant used formerly to pursue their journey in safety and in ease, are in some parts choked up with weeds and grass, and in others are excavated by the periodical rains."

Veter instit tions.

Floods of the 19th century.

Five years later the town of Muzaffarpur and many *parganas* were again under water owing to the overflow of the rivers, and in 1806 heavy floods entirely destroyed the *bhadoi* crops and threatened a failure of the *aghani* harvest; but since the beginning of the 19th century these floods have been fewer, in consequence of the construction of embankments. Great floods have, however, continued to sweep down upon the district at intervals and to cause much suffering.

In 1867 there was a flood which destroyed the crops on 15,000 *bighas* and 1,500 houses on the right bank of the Little Gandak; and in 1871 a fall of 19 inches of rain in 36 hours was followed by a flood of long duration. The greater part of Muzaffarpur itself was submerged, 300 houses were entirely destroyed, and

most, if not all, of the remainder were damaged. The water did not subside for days, but apparently the suffering was transitory, and the cultivators were repaid by a bumper spring harvest. In August 1883 another big flood occurred. The Great Gandak rose 2 feet higher than had ever previously been known, and immense damage was only averted by the embankment which had been reconstructed in 1874; even this, however, was overtopped in places. In other parts of the district large tracts were submerged, crops destroyed, and houses, roads and bridges carried away. The area most severely affected was a parallelogram, 35 miles long by 18 broad, including the country along both banks of the Bāghmati and the Little Gandak, and Muzaffarpur town again suffered severely. In this tract relief works were opened, but the distress was neither intense nor widespread, and soon ceased to be felt.

Floods of 1893. In 1893 the district was visited by no less than three distinct floods, one after another, answering to the heavy falls of rain in July, August and September. The first did no particular damage, but the two others came down upon a country already water-logged, causing an immense amount of injury to crops, houses, roads, and especially to the railway line between Samāstipur and Sītāmarhi. In this district the flood, caused by the overflow of the Bāghmati and Little Gandak, was confined, roughly speaking, to the country lying to the north of the Tirhut State Railway line, with the exception of a tract in the Pāro thāna, where the spill from the northern side leaked through the railway bridges. The area submerged was estimated at 800 to 900 square miles. Throughout this portion of the district most of the *bhadoi* was lost, the portion saved being greatly injured, and the rice plants were swept away not only once, but twice, and, in some places, thrice in succession. The mud houses were washed down by thousands, and it was estimated that out of 1,412 villages within the radius of the floods, 1,144 lost all or more than half of their *bhadoi*, and 995 all or more than half of their rice crops, while over 12,000 houses collapsed.

Flood of 1898. Again, in September 1898, there was a great flood, which was attributed to excessive rainfall in the catchment areas of the Bāghmati and Little Gandak rivers, accentuated later on by the excessive local rainfall and the hurricane of wind that accompanied it. After breaking through the embankments in the Champāran district, the Little Gandak overtopped the Raghai road and the Turkī embankment, breaching both road and embankment extensively. The railway line suffered badly, bridges being underscoured and the embankment breached, so that passenger

FLOODS.

traffic had to be stopped for some days and goods traffic for nearly two months. The damage done to the District Board roads was equally great, and several bridges were completely washed away.

Early floods.

The tract most affected by the floods consisted of 500 square miles in the *doāb*, and here the damage done to the crops was estimated at 12 annas. Practically the whole district, however, was swept by the flood, though it was in this tract that its full destructive force was concentrated ; and the situation was only relieved by the vast volume of water breaking through the Bettiah branch of the railway line, just north-west of Muzaffarpur town. Then similarly breaching the Hājīpur branch near Karhani, it skirted Muzaffarpur on the south, and so resumed the direction of its natural flow south-east to the Ganges. Thousands of houses were swept down, and their inmates had to take refuge as best they could on raised roads and embankments or on the roofs of such houses as were left standing. The number of deaths from drowning reported through the police was 249, but the actual number was no doubt somewhat in excess of this. The town of Muzaffarpur fortunately escaped serious damage, owing to the protection afforded by an embankment reconstructed a few years previously.

Flood of 1902.

The Sītāmarhi subdivision again suffered in August 1902, when four rivers, the Bāghmati, Purānadhar Bāghmati, Lakhandai and Adhwāra, all came down in high flood. The three rivers last named take their rise in the Nepāl *Tarai* at the foot of the lower range of the Himālayas, while the Bāghmati rises in Kātmāndu valley, and when in flood spills over a large area in the *Tarai*, feeding both the Lakhandai and Purānadhar. As all these rivers came down in flood at the same time, it would seem that the cause of the flood was an excessive rainfall along the lower ranges of the Himālayas and in the Nepāl *Tarai*. The Purānadhar Bāghmati first came down in heavy flood, and overflowing its channel spilled into the Lakhandai river. The channel of the Bāghmati also being insufficient to carry off the water brought down in flood, a large surplus volume rushed down the northern side of the high railway embankment which runs across the Sitāmarhi subdivision, and joined the flood of the Purānadhar. The waterway provided in this embankment being inadequate to pass off the water, the combined flood then passed on eastward, and reached Riga station at 5-30 P. M., and Sitāmarhi at 10 P. M., having joined the Lakhandai flood before then. In this part of the district it swept along the north side of the railway embankment from Dheng, until it was enabled to cross it either by

Floods of the 19th century.

overtopping the line or by washing out bridges. Its effects were chiefly felt along the valleys of the Bāghmati and Lakhandai; and to the south of the railway it followed the course of the rivers, laying under water, for a time at least, practically the whole of the country north of the Turkī embankment.

The total loss of life was not great, only 60 persons being drowned, but 800 cattle were lost, and the injury done to house property was very considerable, altogether 14,000 houses being damaged or completely swept away. The town of Sītāmarhi suffered most severely. Here the water reached a height of more than 4 feet above the highest flood-level in 1893, 700 houses were damaged, and 12,000 maunds of grain were destroyed. The police-station, the High school, and the barracks of the jail and of the treasury guard were brought down in ruins, and the dispensary buildings were severely damaged. The court-house and sub-jail escaped, but there were 5 feet of water in the latter, and for two days the prisoners were kept on the roof. The railway line from Sītāmarhi to Riga station was almost continuously topped and extensively breached; and from Riga to Dheng, where the embankment is a high one, several bridges were damaged. As regards the crops, the chief loss was due to the destruction of the *bhadoi*, and it was estimated that half the *makai* crop and nearly half the *maruā* in the flooded area was lost. The rice crop did not suffer appreciably, as it can remain 8 or 10 days under water without much harm; and though in some places it remained submerged for more than 10 days and was a complete loss, only a small part of the subdivision was thus affected. There was, moreover, ample time for replanting even where it had been destroyed; in other parts, the heavy alluvial deposits benefited the flooded lands; and, in spite of the temporary suffering caused by the flood, no relief was either asked for or required.

Flood of 1906.

The last and one of the greatest of the floods to which the district has been exposed has recently occurred in August 1906, the affected area comprising about one-half of the entire district, *i.e.*, some 1,500 square miles. The country round Muzaffarpur, between the Little Gandak and Bāghmati, and north of the latter river was completely flooded; but the greatest damage was caused in the belt of country on either bank of the Little Gandak. Here the floods began about the 15th, rose steadily till the 19th, and began to subside very slowly from the 20th August. The height of the water registered at Muzaffarpur was a foot higher than in the flood of September 1898, when the town was partially inundated;

but on this occasion it remained perfectly dry, owing to the raising and strengthening of embankments on the right bank of the Gandak near Motīpur and Kānti, which gave way in 1898 and admitted a larger amount of water to pass by the rear of the town. For the same reason, the flood passing to the south of the town and crossing the Muzaffarpur-Hājīpur Railway line between Karhani and Muzaffarpur, although higher than usual, did not reach so high a level as in 1898. Thus, the portions of the district in which the worst damage occurred this year comprise the northern part of the Pāro thāna, the whole of the portion of the Muzaffarpur thāna north of the town, the whole of the Sakrā outpost of the same thāna, the Pātepur outpost of the Mahuwā thāna in the Hājīpur subdivision, and the southern part of the Katrā thāna. In addition to this belt, there is also a very large area where the damage was nearly, but not quite, as great, owing to the water being less deep and to the rice crop being thus afforded a greater chance of recovery. This secondary area includes the southern portion of the Belsand thāna in the Sītāmarhi subdivision and the remaining portion of the Katrā thāna and of the Pāro thāna in the head-quarters subdivision. The eastern portion of the latter thāna suffered from the natural drainage coming from the south-western corner of Champāran, which sent down a flood caused by excessive rainfall in that district, and also from a flood of the Great Gandak, which came in for a very short space of time through a breach which was cut in the embankment near the Karnaul factory in order to let the other water out. There was also a high flood in the Puprī thāna in the Sītāmarhi subdivision from the streams which come down from the extreme north of the district; but this is a tract with rapid slopes, off which the water drains quickly, so that the damage done to the crops is generally less serious.

It is estimated that, as a result of these floods and of the excessive rainfall which accompanied them, the *aghani* crop over the affected area will not represent more than 12½ per cent. of a normal crop, while the *makai* has been entirely destroyed. The tract lying between the Little Gandak and the Bāghmati, where the water was dammed up by the Muzaffarpur-Sītāmarhi road, has suffered especially severely. The distress has been aggravated by the extraordinarily high prices prevailing, which are higher even than in 1897. The distribution of relief among the homeless and destitute, and of loans to the cultivators, has commenced, but it is too early yet to say what measures of relief will eventually be required.

As a rule, though considerable distress and great loss of property are caused by such calamities, these evil effects are of a transitory nature. The chief loss which the cultivators sustain from a flood is the destruction of their cattle, and they are soon recompensed for the loss of their crops by a second crop of exceptional abundance grown on the land fertilized by the silt left by the receding water. These floods are primarily due not to a heavy downpour of rain in the district itself, but to excessive rain in the catchment basins in Champāran and Nepāl. The volume of the floods and their destructiveness are no doubt increased by the local rainfall, but as they come in August or September, when the paddy lands require water, and the uplands that stock of moisture on which the spring crops depend, their damage is restricted and their benefits are widespread. As paddy too is the only crop the loss of which causes famine, it follows that inundations, implying as they do a heavy downfall in the months when paddy crops require it, never accompany famine, though they often precede or succeed it at short intervals. Flood and famine have indeed been strangely associated with one another chronologically in Muzaffarpur. In 1785 there was famine, in 1788 flood; in 1866 there was scarcity, in 1867 flood; in 1871 there was flood, in 1873 famine; in 1884 there was flood, in 1885 scarcity; in 1897 there was famine, and in 1898 flood. **Effects of floods.**

The construction of protective embankments is one of the boons conferred on the district by British rule. During the period of the Muhammadan supremacy neither canals were dug to irrigate the land during years of scanty rainfall nor embankments erected to prevent the havoc caused by the overflow of the rivers; and the people were just as subject to natural calamities before 1765 as they were after the English assumed the administration of the country. Every year the Great Gandak, quite unfettered towards the east, flooded parts of the Ratī and Gadheswar *parganas*, not unfrequently sweeping clean across the southern half of the district; and further north the country was equally exposed to the floods of both the Bāghmati and Little Gandak. The position of affairs is now very different. There are embankments extending over 80 miles and protecting 1,340 square miles; the country along the Great Gandak is safe from the disastrous incursions of that river; and the southern side of the Bāghmati is also protected, though the *doāb* between it and the Little Gandak does not enjoy entire immunity from inundation. **EMBANKMENTS.**

Attention appears to have been first drawn to the unprotected state of the southern portion of the district by the flood of the Gandak in 1801, when the East India Company's saltpetre **The Tirhut embankment.**

factory at Singiā near Lālganj was nearly swept away. An enbankment was accordingly constructed extending from the confluence of the river Bayā to Harauli, 6 miles from Hājīpur; but being imperfectly constructed, it was repeatedly breached and immense damage caused. Between 1820 and 1825, it had fallen into such a ruinous state and so much loss had resulted that the land-holders petitioned Government either to repair it or let them do so. Accordingly, in 1830 a new line was laid out, the neighbouring proprietors undertaking to pay for it; but its construction was extremely faulty, and the Gandak frequently broke through and submerged the surrounding country. In this state it continued till 1874, when advantage was taken of the famine-relief operations to remodel, raise and repair it; and as the country between Harauli and Hājīpur was totally unprotected, the embankment was extended to Hājīpur. In 1883 Government agreed to maintain the embankment under a contract of Rs. 200 per mile per annum for a period of 20 years; and it was placed in charge of the Executive Engineer, Gandak Division. On the expiry of this contract in 1903, a new contract for its maintenance was sanctioned for another term of 20 years, the sum of Rs. 2,08,300 being fixed for its upkeep. This amount is recoverable from the proprietors of the estates benefited, *i.e.*, from the zamīndārs of the estates situated in *parganas* Ratī, Gadheswar, Hājīpur, Bhataulià, Garjaul, Saraisā and Bālāgāch; the annual cess thus levied is Rs. 10,415, which gives a rate of Rs. 8-5-3 per square mile or 2½ pies per acre. The Tirhut or Gandak embankment now forms a continuous line along the northern bank of the Gandak, extending from the head of the Bayā river near Karnaul to the confluence of the Gandak and the Ganges near Hājīpur. It is 52 miles in length, and protects an area of 1,250 square miles.

The Turkī embankment. The Turkī embankment along the Bāghmati was first constructed in 1810 by the manager of the Kānti Indigo Factory to safeguard the indigo cultivation of that concern, and for more than half a century it continued to be maintained by the factory. In 1875 it was taken over by Government under the Embankment Act and placed in charge of the Executive Engineer, Gandak Division. It extends for 26 miles along the southern bank of the Bāghmati and protects an area of 90¼ square miles in the *doāb* between that river and the Little Gandak. It is maintained under what is known as the *takāvi* system, *i.e.*, the cost of its maintenance is recovered from the persons benefited, by the annual apportionment of the expenditure incurred. The estates assessed to this cess lie in *parganas* Marwa Khurd, Marwa

Kalan and Khānzādpur, and the annual cost of maintenance amounted on the average to Rs. 4,580 in the quinquennium ending in 1904.

The Dāūdpur embankment.

The only other public embankment is the Dāūdpur embankment, near the Sikandrapur *maidān* at Muzaffarpur, which was constructed in order to check the encroachments of the Little Gandak and to protect the town from floods. Muzaffarpur lies at the apex of an acute angle formed by the Bettiah section of the Tirhut State Railway and the road from Muzaffarpur to Sītāmarhi, the Little Gandak running within the angle in a south-easterly direction. The railway embankment on one side, and the Sītāmarhi road on the other, both aided by private embankments erected by factories, drive the full force of the water down on to Muzaffarpur town, and the embankment is thus required to protect it from inundation. It extends over 3,250 feet and the retired lines over 2,400 feet, and the area protected is 2½ square miles. Like the Turkī embankment, it is maintained by Government, which recovers from the estates benefited the expenditure incurred in maintaining it in an efficient system.

FAMINES.

The earliest famine of which we possess any detailed record is that of 1769-70, when one-third of the population of Bengal is said to have perished, and Muzaffarpur suffered like the other districts of Bihār. A serious drought followed in 1783, when advances had to be made for the relief of the cultivators, though the scarcity did not culminate in actual famine. The years 1787 and 1788 were no more propitious, as the country was inundated, the cattle died in large numbers, and the crops failed. There was a serious drought in 1791, when all persons, except grain-dealers, were arbitrarily prohibited from keeping by them more than one year's supply of grain; another drought followed in 1792; and in 1809 there was considerable suffering owing to the failure of all the principal crops.

Famine of 1866.

The famine of 1866 was, however, the first great famine of the 19th century. This famine was severely felt in Muzaffarpur both as regards its intensity and the wide area over which it was spread. In a large part of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, the rice crops had failed partially in 1863, and still more so in 1864. In October 1865, with the prospect of a still more complete failure on the Nepál frontier, and a deficiency of the rice crops in neighbouring districts, the prices of rice and Indian-corn rose to thrice the ordinary rate, and cases of suicide from want of food, and of deaths from starvation, were reported by the police. The harvesting of the rice crop, however, temporarily supplied both food and wages, and prices in the end of 1865, and in the

beginning of 1866, were somewhat easier. In February, however, they again began to rise. The usual grain-supply from Nepāl ceased; and as there was no demand for labour, the poorer classes suffered extremely, and began to desert their homesteads and to migrate southwards in large numbers. Fires and grain-robberies for the purpose of obtaining food became very common, and between April and June, the labourers, getting no employment and having nothing to fall back on, were reduced to the greatest destitution. No organized system of relief was commenced till June, but eventually relief operations were undertaken at 16 centres—7 in the head-quarters subdivision, 8 in Sītāmarhi and 1 in Hājīpur. The suffering was greatest during July, August, and September, the price of rice ranging from 7 to 5¼ seers per rupee. The numbers in receipt of daily relief in July were 6,768; in August 11,621; in September 6,876. In the middle of August cholera broke out in Sītāmarhi, and appeared also at Muzaffarpur. The people, reduced by long privation, fell easy victims to the disease, and 797 persons out of 1,070 died within an average period of eight days after admission to the hospital. In September the extreme pressure began to diminish, owing to the good *bhadoi* or autumn crops, and fortunately it never increased again, as the winter rice, in most parts, was a good crop. Still in some places famine, disease and desertion had so debilitated or diminished the population that half the land remained uncultivated, and relief operations had to be carried on till February 1867. The total amount spent in relief was Rs. 39,448; the average daily number relieved was 5,235; and the estimated number of deaths from starvation or disease engendered by want was 60,321.

The famine of 1874. The next great famine which visited the district was the famine of 1874. The rains of 1873 were insufficient all over Muzaffarpur, but nowhere except in Hājīpur did this insufficiency supervene on a previously dry season. During the months of June, July, and August, *i.e.*, the months in which the autumn crop is sown and matures, the rainfall was abnormal in the direction of excess, but only 2½ inches fell in September, whilst October and November were absolutely rainless, the average of these three months in ordinary years being 13 inches. The outturn of the autumn harvest varied considerably in different parts. In Hājīpur and the head-quarters subdivision it was three-fourths of an average, while the Indian-corn crop is said to have exceeded the average by one-fourth, but in Sītāmarhi the outturn was but one-half of an average harvest. The extent to which the winter rice crop failed in this district was not

recorded with as much precision as could be desired, but there seems to be no doubt that in the Sītāmarhi subdivision the yield was not less than one-fourth of an average crop; that in the head-quarters subdivision the outturn was better than in Sītāmarhi and was about three-eighths of an average crop; while in Hājīpur the outturn was not less than one-eighth of the average. The want of moisture in the soil had also a most injurious effect on the *rabi* or winter crops, and the best estimates of their outturn show them to have yielded in the head-quarters subdivision half an average crop, in the Sītāmarhi subdivision three-fourths, and in the Hājīpur subdivision five-eighths of the average.

It will thus be seen that of all the subdivisions of Muzaffarpur, the head-quarters subdivision was the least jeopardized by the failure of the crops in 1873-74; but it was unhappily situated with famine-stricken areas all round it, and the stocks, manifestly insufficient to withstand the numerous drains on them from all quarters, were soon reduced to a pitch of depletion that, at the prevailing market rates, placed them out of the reach of large numbers of the community. Moreover, private trade, which in the early months of the year showed much vitality, restricted itself to the southern portion of the subdivision as the year wore on.

The result of these combined influences was that a large section of the inhabitants of the subdivision became dependent on Government aid for subsistence. In the Hājīpur subdivision, on the other hand, private trade was always equal to the demands made upon it. Situated on the left bank of the Ganges, opposite Patna, the great trade centre of Bihār, this subdivision was more accessible to private traders, with the result that Government was relieved of almost all anxiety for the safety of its people. In Sītāmarhi not only was the failure greatest, but at no time during the year was it reached by voluntary grain importation. This inertness of private trade, and consequent early prevalence of famine prices, imposed on Government the necessity of affording to Sītāmarhi and the head-quarters subdivision a very large measure of assistance, while it found it necessary to incur only an inconsiderable expenditure in Hājīpur.

The price of rice varied during the first six months of 1874 from 9 to 10 seers for the rupee or double the usual rate. Indian-corn and millets, which form a large part of the food of the poor, and which ordinarily were procurable at the rate of 30 seers for the rupee, rose to 13 to 15 seers during the same period. In outlying markets and villages the rates were much

higher. Relief works were first opened in Sītāmarhi in December 1873, and in February 1874 it was necessary to extend them to the head-quarters subdivision; but it was not till April that any had to be started in Hājīpur, where both charity and relief labour were far less necessary than in the north and centre of the district: in fact, the number on relief works there never rose beyond 8,350. Altogether 47,000 tons of grain were sold, distributed, advanced as loans or paid as wages; Rs 2,21,000 were advanced in the shape of loans; Rs. 1,41,000 were expended in charitable relief, the number of persons in receipt of such charity rising from 6,550 in April 1874 to 62,500 at the end of June and falling in October to 2,115; and 11 lakhs were paid as wages, the number of labourers employed on relief works rising from 851 in December to 327,248, or about one-seventh of the total population, in May, and falling in September to 39,650. The relief afforded by Government in various forms throughout the famine was on an enormous scale, and it has been estimated that it was sufficient for the support of over three million persons for a period of one month.

Scarcity of 1876, 1889 and 1892.

Three periods of scarcity intervened between this famine and that of 1896-97. In 1876 there was some scarcity in Sītāmarhi owing to the failure of the rice crop, but no relief was actually required, as the Subdivisional Officer turned out the labouring population along the banks of streams, and by banking up the water irrigated large areas on which cold-weather crops were sown. In 1889 the failure of the winter rice caused scarcity in the tract of country running along the Nepāl frontier, and gratuitous relief had to be given to some 200 people as early as February. This number rose to 3,000 in June and to 8,000 in August, when the distress was aggravated by the heavy floods of July, but fell to 4,000 in October when relief was gradually withdrawn.

Part of the district was again affected in 1892 owing to the deficiency of the rains in 1891, when the winter rice and *rabi* crops failed. The total area affected was 1,300 square miles, the tracts which suffered most being the Lālganj thāna in Hājīpur and the Belsand and Sheohar thānas in Sītāmarhi. Relief works were opened in March and closed early in July, the attendance averaging 5,000 and rising in the first half of June to 14,000. The total number relieved was, however, hardly more than 1 per cent. of the population of the affected area.

Famine of 1896-97.

Then came the great famine of 1896-97, the greatest famine to which the district was exposed in the 19th century; but on this occasion the people showed unexpected powers of resistance, owing to better communications and their improved material

condition. The rains of 1896 commenced in May; there was a heavy fall of over 13½ inches in July, which caused some floods and filled the swamps at an unusually early date, before a rice crop could be obtained from them; but up to the end of July the total fall was only one-tenth of an inch below the normal. This heavy rain was followed by two long periods of drought—one in August and the other in September, and after the 18th of that month no rain fell. It soon became apparent that nothing but good rain in the *Hathiyā* asterism (September 28th to October 8th) could save the rice and give sufficient moisture for the *rabi;* but the *Hathiyā* passed away without rain, not a drop fell throughout October, and the all-important rice crop was doomed. In the event, the deficiency of the rainfall amounted to less than 25 per cent. of the normal, but it was so unfortunately distributed that much of it did more harm than good; and the result was that the *bhadoi* was only a five to six annas crop, the *rabi* 11½ annas, and the rice not more than 3 annas, the outturn for all the three crops of the year being only about 43 per cent. of the average.

In these circumstances, during the period of greatest distress, the whole of the district was severely affected, except certain portions mentioned below, which were slightly affected, and the extreme south of the Hājīpur subdivision, where a combination of exceptionally favourable circumstances preserved the people from any inconvenience but that of high prices; here the land is extraordinarily fertile, the cultivators more industrious and intelligent than elsewhere, and the tract received more rain than other parts of the district, especially a most beneficial fall in November 1896. Speaking generally, the worst parts of the district were the Sītāmarhi subdivision and the northern half of the head-quarters subdivision; in both these areas rice is largely grown, being in fact the staple crop in Sītāmarhi, and the loss of it was a severe blow to the people. A strip of land on either side of the Adhwāra and Lakhandai rivers, and a tract on both sides of the Bāghmati in the north-east corner of the district, were saved by the damming of those rivers and the irrigation channels leading from them, and were returned as slightly affected only. The whole of the head-quarters subdivision, except a small patch near Karnaul and the Gandak on the west, and a tract on the lower reaches of the Lakhandai to the east, was severely affected, the worst part being the northern part of the Sadar subdivision, and a point on its southern boundary between Karhani and Dhūli railway stations. In the Hājīpur subdivision the only part severely affected was a tract along the northern boundary of the Mahuwā thāna spreading into the south of the head-quarters subdivision, and a small tract

between Lālganj and the railway: the greater part of the Mahuwā thāna was only slightly affected, and the Hājīpur thāna not at all.

Food began to rise to a high price in October 1896, when rice was selling at 8 seers to the rupee in Muzaffarpur town; and in November test relief-works were started at Sheohar, Belsand and Parihar in the western and northern parts of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, which have in all famines been the first to feel the pinch. They failed however to attract labour and were closed, and it was not until the end of January that distress became in any sense acute. The number of persons in receipt of relief then rose till the end of May, when 59,000 persons with 4,000 dependents were employed on relief works and 59,000 more were in receipt of gratuitous relief. The number of the latter increased to 72,000 in July, but the number of relief-workers had meanwhile declined, and the famine was over by the end of September. The largest proportion of the population relieved in a single day either gratuitously or on relief-works was 10 per cent., and it was estimated that of those who attended relief-works at least 75 per cent. were landless labourers. As in 1874, the numbers on relief-works rose very slowly, partly owing to the high tasks at first set by the Collector on roads, partly to his decision not to employ tank-digging as a means of relief, and partly to the stocks held by the cultivators. The total expenditure on relief-works was Rs. 5,64,000 and on gratuitous relief Rs. 4,91,000, in addition to which over 2 lakhs were advanced under the Agriculturists' Loans Act. The imports of rice into the district during the famine amounted to nearly 33,000 tons, chiefly Burma rice from Calcutta. The affected area covered 1,851 square miles with a population of 1,660,000, and though the people suffered much, no loss of life appears to have been directly attributable to want of food; the reported deaths, indeed, fell short of the average of the three preceding years by about 25,000.

TRACTS LIABLE TO FAMINE. The prime cause of these famines is the entire dependence of Muzaffarpur for the productiveness of its soil on a sufficient and timely rainfall; in parts, the rice cultivation is so highly developed that the failure of that crop results in serious distress over a considerable tract of country, and it is an accepted fact that without such failure widespread distress will not occur. Rice occupies nearly 50 per cent. of the cultivated area of this district, and varies from 73 per cent. in Sītāmarhi thāna in the north to 23 per cent. in Hājīpur thāna in the south. In fact, in none of the thānas in the Sītāmarhi subdivision is the percentage less than 71, while in none of the thānas in Hājīpur subdivision is

the percentage more than 34. In the head-quarters subdivision Katrā alone has 63·35 per cent., while the other two thānas, viz., Muzaffarpur and Pāro, have 35·53 and 35·73 per cent. only of their cultivated area under rice. It is the thānas which grow winter rice that are most seriously affected by unpropitious rainfall, because the soils suitable for this crop will not bear a second crop except *khesāri* and similar inferior grains, and they too require a good deal of moisture for their germination. The statistics of winter rice therefore afford the surest index of degrees of susceptibility to famine. All the four thānas in the Sītāmarhi subdivision have nearly 60 per cent. of their cultivated area occupied by winter rice; outside that subdivision Katrā returns 42 per cent., but no other thāna more than 35 per cent., under that crop. In the whole district 2,667 square miles with a population of 2,435,000 are regarded as liable to famine, and the maximum number of persons likely to require relief in the event of serious famine is estimated at 136,000, of whom 58,500 would require relief on works and 77,500 gratuitous relief.

PROTECTIVE SCHEMES.

To ensure protection against famine, a scheme was put forward as long ago as 1876 for the construction of a high level irrigation canal leading from the Bāghmati to the Lakhandai. Regarding this project, the following remarks of the Indian Irrigation Commission (1901—03) may be quoted:—"The Bāghmati is a much larger river than the Bakiya; and 1876 it was proposed to throw a weir across it, and to construct a canal calculated to irrigate 152,000 acres of *kharif* and 50,000 acres of *rabi*. This scheme was rejected by the Government of India, but was revived on a smaller and less ambitious scale after the famine of 1896-97, and work was proceeded with for famine relief. A detailed project was then prepared for a canal to cost 9 lakhs, omitting the weir over the river. This was condemned by the Chief Engineer, who considered that a weir and proper regulating head sluice were quite indispensable; and this brought the question back to the estimate of 41 lakhs which had been rejected in 1876. For any project of a smaller scope the construction of a weir could not be justified. It seemed evident, however, that the larger work could never be remunerative; while, in the opinion of the Lieutenant-Governor, the arguments which had been advanced in its favour as a purely protective work were not sufficiently strong to warrant its execution. This opinion we are inclined to accept but with some reservation. The papers indicate that the project is likely to cost between 40 and 50 lakhs, but that the average gross revenue will amount to 1½ lakhs only, of which 1 lakh will be required for working expenses. Taking

interest charges at 5 per cent., the work is likely to impose a permanent charge on the State of between 1½ and 2 lakhs per annum.

"A Collector of long experience in this district considers that the probable cost of providing famine relief, within the tract which the canal would protect, is equivalent to an annual charge of Rs. 25,000. Such an estimate must be necessarily speculative; but if the cost of relief is no greater than this, we cannot but agree that it is not worth while, for the sake of avoiding it, to incur a permanent charge of 1½ or 2 lakhs. We are unwilling, however, to believe that it is hopeless to anticipate a higher average gross revenue than 1½ lakhs from a work which is capable of irrigating 200,000 acres, or an all-round rate of only 12 annas per acre. It may not be possible to realize a higher rate than this in a district which can do so well without irrigation in years of ordinary rainfall, or in three years out of four. But after the experience gained on the Son and Orissa canals, we think that it should be possible to educate the people in the value of protective irrigation, and to induce them, within a reasonable period, to take long leases at rates not lower than those which are now realized on the latter canals. If the canal can be relied on to give unfailing protection to 200,000 acres in a year of drought at a capital cost of 50 lakhs, it cannot be regarded as very expensive; and if it were possible to increase the gross revenue within a reasonable time to 2½ lakhs, involving an all-round rate of only Re. 1-4 per acre on the whole area that can be irrigated, we think that the construction of the work would be justified on account of its protective value. . . . . We are not satisfied, however, that the smaller scheme of 1896 should be wholly condemned; and we think there may perhaps be a good case for completing it as a district work either at once or whenever it may be necessary to employ relief labour."

CHAPTER VII.

RENTS, WAGES AND PRICES.

Produce Rents.

Rents are generally paid in cash, but they are paid in kind for a small percentage of the area under cultivation. Non-occupancy ryots and under-ryots pay produce rents for 19 and 61 per cent. respectively of their holdings, but the area held by these classes of tenants is comparatively insignificant; and such rents are paid for only 7 per cent. of the land held by occupancy and settled ryots, which accounts for no less than 82 per cent. of the holdings. Where produce rents obtain, it is because the crops are precarious owing to the land being exposed to inundation or deterioration; and mango groves which bear fruit only at intervals are also frequently held under the same system. Rents are paid in kind more largely in the south than in the north of the district, and are most common in the Hājīpur, Mahuwā and Lālganj thānas, where the area held on produce rents is 13·2, 11·6 and 7·5 respectively of the cultivated land. In Hājīpur a considerable area consists of Gangetic *diāras*, where the crops are liable to be washed away by a sudden rise of the river. In Mahuwā there are numerous lakes, which serve the purposes of drainage areas, and the crops grown there in dry seasons are liable to be swamped by sudden floods. In the Lālganj thāna again the land to the west is exposed to inundation from the Gandak. Not only are the drainage basins more numerous in the south, but the demand for land is greater, and cultivators are therefore tempted to take up land on terms which they would decline in less congested areas. This competition for land is, in fact, the main cause of the prevalence of produce rents, as it induces cultivators to settle for land on which the crops are very precarious.

***Batāi* system.**

There are three ways in which produce rents are paid, viz., by the *batāi*, *bhāoli* and *mankhap* system. Under the *batāi* system the actual produce, including the straw, is divided between the landlord and tenant; generally each receives half of the crop, but occasionally it is divided in the proportion of $\frac{7}{16}$ths to the ryot and $\frac{9}{16}$ths to the landlord, or $\frac{5}{11}$ths to the ryot and $\frac{6}{11}$ths to the landlord. The crop is either divided on the field, in which case the

practice is known as *bojh-batāi*, because the landlord and tenant each get a fixed share of the sheaves (*bojhā*), or the division of the produce takes place on the threshing floor and is called *agor-batāi*, because the crop has to be carefully watched (*agornā*) to prevent pilfering.

Bhāoli system.

Under the *bhāoli* system the crop is appraised in the field before it is reaped, and the value of the landlord's share is paid by the tenant either in grain or cash. This system is not so common as the *batāi*, which is the most prevalent in the district, though appraisement is generally more advantageous to the landlord, both because there is no pilfering and because he can bring pressure to bear on the cultivator to secure a favourable appraisement.

Mankhap system.

The *mankhap* system of rent payment is a peculiar system, found mainly on the estates of the Rājā of Sheohar in the thāna of that name and on the estate of the Sursand Rānīs in the Puprī thāna: it is especially common in the Sheohar thāna, where as much as 6·6 per cent. of the holdings pay produce rents. Where it prevails, the tenant binds himself to pay annually a fixed amount of grain ranging in the case of rice from 8 to 12 maunds per acre, whatever the outturn may be. As a rule, the *mankhap* is paid on certain specified plots in the holding, usually on about 3 *kathās* in the *bīgha*; but in some cases the tenant pays a fixed annual amount on the total area in addition to his cash rent. This system appears to be a comparatively modern innovation, and is not found in the more highly developed parts of the district, but only in areas reclaimed during the last century. It differs from the ordinary system of payment of rent in kind, in that the demand does not adjust itself to good or bad seasons; and it is in this respect that it is so inequitable, as whether his crop is a bumper one or an utter failure, the tenant has to pay the amount agreed upon. It is not surprising therefore that it is exceedingly unpopular, and that the ryots regard it as equivalent to cultivating their lands free of cost for the landlord. Fortunately the evil is a very limited one, as the lands held under the system are few in number; they are situated in a part of the district where rents are low; and they consist almost entirely of paddy-fields, which generally give a good outturn.

CASH RENTS.

The average rates of rent paid by the several classes of ryots and under-ryots are as follow:—ryots at fixed rates, Rs. 3-11-11; occupancy and settled ryots, Rs. 3-12-3; non-occupancy ryots, Rs. 4-9; and under-ryots, Rs. 4-5-8 per acre. The average incidence of rent per acre for ryots of all classes is Rs. 3-13-6.

Rents are higher in the south than in the north of the district, where the demand for land has developed at a comparatively late

date. In the case of occupancy and settled ryots, who form the great majority of the cultivators, none of the thānas in the south, except Pāro, return a rate of less than Rs. 4 an acre, while none of the thānas in the north return a rate higher than this. The rate of rent is highest in the neighbourhood of Hājīpur, where poppy, tobacco, potatoes, etc., are grown on land which is never fallow and which often produces four crops in the year. Rents vary, however, not only with the character and situation of the land, but also according to the caste and position of the cultivator, and a tenant of high caste pays less than one of lower social rank.

Enhancement of rents.

Compared with the neighbouring districts, Muzaffarpur does not occupy an unfavourable position as regards rent rates, in spite of the large increase which has taken place since the Permanent Settlement. Mr. Stevenson-Moore is of opinion that, speaking broadly, rent rates have increased 100 per cent. in the past three-quarters of a century; and observes that though the increase of zamīndāri assets has been largely obtained by the reclamation of waste and the expansion of cultivation, there can be no doubt that enhancement of rent rates has been also an important factor leading to this result. Whatever the cause, whether it was the depopulation of Tirhut by the great famine of 1770, or its general inaccessibility and backwardness, the fact remains that half a century ago the rents were very light; and this fact greatly conduced to and also justified the subsequent increase. The two main methods by which enhancements have been obtained have been by partition and arbitrary increase of rent rates. Partition has been the main cause of the increase, and it is noticeable that with hardly an exception the most excessive enhancement of rent rates has taken place in the villages that have undergone partition. There is generally a keen desire on the part of proprietors of joint estates to get their shares separated by partition, and the result is the creation of a large number of petty landlords, who are unable to keep up their position, but who try to do so by squeezing as much as possible from their ryots. The other great cause of enhancement has been the way in which zamīndārs have been able to tamper with rent rates, enhancing them at their own pleasure and in a purely arbitrary way. Consequently, rent rates, even where they exist, have often little or no relation to the quality of the soil.

The ryots of large proprietors enjoy the greatest security with regard to tenant right, and the ryots of small proprietors the least; while the ryots of large tenure-holders enjoy the most privileged rent rates and those of small tenure-holders suffer the most excessive. The large tenure-holders are generally indigo-planters, and their policy is to leave rents alone, so long as land

is given for indigo; and the rate is highest in estates held by petty lease-holders or *thīkādārs*.

Payment of rents. Rents are usually paid in four instalments, except in the case of very petty zamīndārs, who generally do not adhere to any fixed instalments, but realize their entire demand as soon as they can. The first instalment is due in the month of Asin or October, when the *bhadoi*, the first harvest of the agricultural year, has been reaped. This instalment (*kist*) is invariably one-fourth of the total annual rent. The second is levied in Aghan or Pus (December), when the winter rice crop is reaped, and varies from one-fourth to half of the rental according to the extent of the rice land. The next instalment is paid in Chait (April) and varies from two to six annas; and the last is in Baisākh or Jeth (May), when the *rabi* crops have been reaped and threshed; in some cases it is one-fourth and in some one-eighth of the total rental. A portion of this last instalment is frequently realized when the harvesting of the *bhadoi* crop is begun in September.

WAGES. Statistics of the wages given for certain selected classes of labour during the ten years 1892—1901 will be found in the Statistical Appendix. From this statement it will be seen that, even in so short a period, there has been a general rise in the rates paid for labour. This is most marked in the case of skilled labour, which now commands a higher value than it did formerly. Among masons, carpenters and blacksmiths the wage shows an upward tendency; the silversmith charges a higher rate for his workmanship; and the shoemaker and tailor have raised their tariff. The rise is gradual, but is clearly observable; and it appears to be due to a combination of circumstances, such as an advance in the standard of comfort among the natives of the better class, the opening of new lines of railway, and the resultant communication with large centres of industry.

Outside urban areas the wages of labour generally maintain much the same level from year to year, and this is particularly the case with unskilled labour. But, even here, there has been a noticeable increase in the daily wage obtained by the labourer during the last generation. Adult male labourers, who 30 years ago used to receive only 4 pice, now get 8 Gorakhpurī or *lohiā* pice; women get 6 pice where formerly they were paid 3 pice; and boys are paid a daily wage of 4 to 5 pice instead of 2 pice. This class therefore has not been seriously affected by the corresponding increase in the price of food; and they are moreover, to a great extent, secure from suffering on that account, as wages in the villages are still usually paid wholly or partly in kind. A ploughman is paid 2 annas for half a day'

work, but besides this, he is given for breakfast half a *kachchā* seer (5 chittacks) of some inferior grain like *maruā*, *makai*, etc. In all agricultural operations prior to reaping, except ploughing, a labourer, when paid in kind, gets 4 *kachchā* seers of one of the cheap grains, such as unhusked coarse paddy, *maruā*, *makai*, *khesāri* and *kodo*. When paid in cash, he gets 8 Gorakhpurī or *lohiā* pice, besides one-eighth of a seer of *makai* for his breakfast. When engaged in transplanting, labourers are usually fed once a day on coarse rice and pulse. Weeding is done at a period when the cultivators' circumstances are straitened, and the labourers sometimes have to accept a little less food. At the current prices of the grain in which labourers are paid either in whole or part, the average wage in cash would be 1½ anna, except for transplanting, when it equals to 2 annas. From the time of reaping agricultural labour is everywhere paid in kind. In reaping and threshing the labourer gets one-eighth of the produce reaped. The remuneration for the person who watches crops is 5 *dhurs*, or $\frac{1}{80}$th of the gross produce. In the case of *makai*, when the cultivator adopts the unusual practice of employing some one else to watch the crop, a double wage is paid, the responsibility being so much greater.

Carpenters, blacksmiths and other members of the village community, who indirectly assist cultivation, are also paid in kind for their labour, and it is estimated that they absorb altogether $\frac{1}{80}$th of the gross produce. On the whole, it may be said that $\frac{1}{40}$th of the gross produce of all food-crops goes to defray the cost of watchmen, village artisans, etc. This system is particularly suited to an agricultural country like Muzaffarpur, as it has the advantage of being unaffected by any rise in the price of food-grains. Whatever the fluctuation in the price of these, the labourer's wage remains the same.

Labour supply.

It is estimated that the supply of labour exceeds the demand by 68 per cent., and that there is labour for about one-third of the female labouring population after the male population has been satisfied. In these circumstances, the continuance of the indigo industry has a very important bearing upon the labour problem, as will be seen from the facts and figures quoted by the Settlement Officer. He showed by calculation that indigo requires four and a half times as much labour as other crops, an acre under indigo giving employment to 172 labourers, while an acre under ordinary cultivation would only give employment to 39 persons; and he stated, on the authority of the Secretary of the Association, that the concerns of the Indigo Planters' Association had indigo on 74,214 acres and employed an average of 35,000 labourers per

diem throughout the year. The industry has suffered terribly since that time (1901) from the competition of the artificial dye; several factories have been closed or have reduced their cultivation; and it is stated in the final forecast of the indigo crop of 1905 that the area under cultivation in 1904 was only 35,000 acres, and that the area estimated as sown in 1905 had fallen to 25,000 acres. According to the above scale, this means that over 24,000 persons have been thrown out of employment, of whom only about 5,500 can have found employment on the cultivation which has taken the place of indigo. The decline of the industry has also had a serious effect on the wages obtained for labour; for, according to statistics prepared by the Director-General of Statistics, the number of persons employed in indigo factories increased from 1891 to 1896 and then fell, while the wages of agricultural labourers rose steadily till the latter year, and then fell from Rs. 4 to Rs. 3.

At the same time, the planters complain that, far from there being an excess of labour, they suffer from a serious deficiency. Rates have gone up, and they are already inconvenienced by the emigration which takes place to the eastern districts every year. Further, the consequence of their changing from indigo to sugar and other country crops has been that they need labour at the same instead of at a different time from that at which the ordinary zamīndār and cultivator require it.

PRICES. A statement of the prices current in each subdivision during the years 1893—1902 is given in the Statistical Appendix. It is interesting to compare these prices with those obtaining a century ago, and to realize how enormously the value of food-grains has risen. On the 1st December 1799 the price of the finest *arwā* rice was 32½ seers, and of *sāthi* rice 1 maund 5 seers per rupee; and in 1803, a year of scarcity, the cheapest rice sold at 1 maund 3 seers and the dearest at 20 seers per rupee, while the same sum could purchase 2 maunds 10 seers of barley. From the statement in the Statistical Appendix it will be seen that during the decade ending in 1902 the price of rice in the head-quarters subdivision was never less than 16 seers per rupee. Although, however, the price of staple food-grains has increased so greatly, the value of labour has also risen; there has been a great growth in the income of all classes; and during the last generation the development of communications has had the effect of levelling prices over larger and larger areas. Thirty years ago there was no railway in the district, but now each subdivision is bisected by a branch of the Tirhut State Railway, which places them in direct communication with the great granaries of India. There

is consequently less variation in the prices of food-grains in different parts than formerly; and the failure of the crops has a tendency to be less felt, as well as the effect of failures in isolated tracts. Besides this, a great quantity of the labour is of an agricultural character and is paid in kind, so that the high prices affect a large section of the community less than would otherwise be the case.

In the famine of 1866-67 the maximum price of rice was Rs. 8 per maund; and in 1873 prices were much higher than this in the beginning of January. On the 10th of that month the cheapest rate at which rice could be bought was Rs. 3 a maund, while barley, the cheapest grain in the district, fetched Rs. 2 a maund. The highest price of common rice reached during this famine was Rs. 5-12 a maund. In the famine of 1897 the price of common rice went even higher. In 1895-96 prices were below the normal up to July 1896, when they began to rise, the price of common rice going up steadily from that time from 11 seers to 10, 9 and 8 seers per rupee; the last figure was reached in the head-quarters subdivision in December 1896, in Sītāmarhi in March 1897, and in Hājīpur in April 1897. When it came to be realized that the *rabi* crop would be insufficient for the support of the people, prices rose again, and in July 1897 the price of common rice in Sītāmarhi reached 6¾ seers, the highest recorded anywhere in the district during that famine or at any other time.

Famine prices.

Writing in 1877 the Collector of Muzaffarpur described the people as pinched and stinted, partly by reason of over-population and partly through the *thikādāri* system and the insufficient protection the rent law afforded the ryots. In good years the majority of the ryots, he said, enjoyed a bare sufficiency of the necessaries of life, and in years of short outturn they suffered privations and sunk deeper and deeper in debt. Nine years later the Collector painted their condition in even blacker colours. "Extreme poverty," he wrote, "is undoubtedly the lot of the great majority of the inhabitants of the district. The prevailing poverty is accompanied by a degree of dirt and sordidness in the personal habits of the people and of grinding penuriousness, which I have not seen in other parts of India. The circumstances of the lower classes have approached dangerously to the limits of destitution." Since that time the district has passed through the searching test of famine, which, straining as it does all their resources, is perhaps the best test of the prosperity of a people so dependent on the soil. The famine of 1896-97 furnished a striking demonstration of the general improvement which had taken place during the last generation, and showed that the picture

MATERIAL CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

drawn a decade before of the wretched condition of the people was either overdrawn or no longer represented the existing facts.

Nowhere did the famine of 1873-74 cause greater suffering than in the district of Tirhut, which comprised both Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā; and we have it on the authority of Sir A. P. MacDonnell that the ryots of that district were so impoverished, so utterly without resource, and so unable to bear up against the failure of a single season's crop that one-third of the population was at one period in receipt of relief from Government. In 1896-97, when the distress was at its greatest, more than three-fifths of the persons receiving relief in the Division belonged to the districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā; but instead of forming one-third of the population of those districts, they now formed less than 3½ per cent. of it. The opinion of the Government of Bengal on this point is contained in the following extract from the Resolution on the Commissioner's report:—"That under less favourable circumstances than in 1873-74, the numbers requiring Government relief should have been so much less would appear to establish the fact of general improvement in the general circumstances of the people, but the whole conditions of the relief administration during the two famines were so different that the inference is not so conclusive as it would have been had the same methods been adopted in both cases. Nevertheless the general experience and observations of the officers engaged in the famine, some of them with knowledge of facts, both then and now, as well as the concurrent opinions of non-officials acquainted with these provinces, do indicate that even in Bihār, during the past quarter of a century, there has been a considerable advance in material prosperity, and that the power of the country as a whole to withstand the calamities of seasons has greatly increased."

Equally striking evidence of the increased prosperity of the people is afforded by the results of the enquiries made by Mr. Stevenson-Moore during the last settlement operations. He found that there are, on an average, in each square mile 45 persons who cultivate as landlords, 496 pure cultivators, 171 cultivating labourers, and 81 pure labourers, and that 90 per cent. of this population live in ordinary years in a very moderate state of comfort. It would, he considers, require a succession of very bad seasons to bring the cultivating labourer or the pure cultivator in any numbers to destitution, and the danger grows yearly less; but, he adds, it is impossible to obscure the fact that indications exist of cultivators being starved out to make room for the increasing pressure on the soil of the superior castes and landlord classes. This tendency is inevitable in a district containing a

rapidly increasing population of petty proprietors. There is no doubt that the agricultural development of the north is more pronounced than that of the south; and it may be said broadly that in the south and centre of the district, where the standard of cultivation is high, where irrigation is practised to some extent, and where the population is not wholly dependent upon the rice crop, the lower agricultural classes are fairly well off, but that in the north and west, where these advantages do not exist, these classes, though better off than their neighbours in many parts of the districts of Champāran and Darbhangā, are in but poor condition and are liable to suffer severely in times of scarcity.

The one class which justifies the account given above of the destitution of the people is that of the landless labourer. Spending what he earns from day to day, he has very little to pawn or sell in times of distress; he gets no credit from the *mahājan;* and he is the first to succumb if the crops fail and he cannot get labour. His total income is estimated at Rs. 10-15, or Rs. 2-6 less than the amount required to maintain him in a fair state of comfort, and the first indication of real distress throws him on the hands of Government. Pure labourers, however, form only 9 per cent. of the total population, and manage both their meals by having for one of them cheap root-crops, like *aluā* and *suthni* which usually sell very cheap at the season when there is little field work to be done, viz., in January and February. The agricultural classes are in a far better position, and have a resource unknown to the ryot of Bengal proper in the cultivation of indigo and opium. It has been calculated that on the whole the cultivation of indigo costs Rs. 40 per acre; and with the exception of Rs. 2 per acre for seed, which is obtained from the United Provinces, all the remainder of this cost is expended in the district. In this way, it is estimated, over 18⅓ lakhs were paid away in hard cash in the famine year 1896-97. The cultivation of opium is on a far smaller scale, but the amount it brings into the pockets of the cultivators is considerable. Those who undertake to grow poppy receive advances in cash from the Opium Department, and these advances are made at a time when money is most wanted. In the famine of 1896-97 nearly four lakhs of rupees were paid on this account to the cultivators, and no less than six lakhs were advanced in 1904-05.

Another matter which should not be left out of account in estimating the prosperity of the people is the extent to which they receive remittances from abroad. Large numbers of labourers migrate annually at the beginning of the cold weather, in search

of work on the roads, railways and fields in other districts, returning to their homes at the end of the hot weather, in time for the agricultural operations, which commence with the bursting of the monsoon; and besides this, a considerable number of the adult males are spread over other parts of India in *quasi*-permanent employ. All these persons make remittances to their homes, while those who migrate for a time bring back with them the balance of their savings. In this way, large sums of money are sent or brought into the district every year, and are expended in the support of the inhabitants. In the famine year 1896-97 over 15 lakhs were paid by money-order in Muzaffarpur, the money-orders being almost all for sums below Rs. 10, and the average about half that sum; and it appears certain that a very large proportion represented remittances sent by emigrants to their homes. Since that time the amount thus remitted has increased, and in 1904-05 the total value of the money-orders paid amounted to 23½ lakhs of rupees. Considering that the amount paid in 1896-97 was unusually large in consequence of the exceptional drain on the resources of the inhabitants, this increase may fairly be taken as in indication of growing prosperity.

CHAPTER VIII.

OCCUPATIONS, MANUFACTURES AND TRADE.

As in other districts of Bihār, the great majority of the inhabitants are engaged in agricultural pursuits, no less than 76·4 per cent. of the total population deriving their livelihood from agriculture. Of the remainder, 6·2 per cent. are supported by industries; the professional classes account for 0·7 per cent.; and, as might be expected in a district which contains no manufacturing towns or important trade centres, the commercial class is very small, amounting to only 0·5 per cent. of the inhabitants. OCCUPATIONS.

Of the agricultural population, 33 per cent. are actual workers; these include 23,000 rent-receivers, 581,000 rent-payers and 90,000 labourers. Of the industrial population, 46 per cent. are actual workers, of whom 8,000 are fishermen and fish-dealers, 5,000 oil-pressers and sellers and 5,000 saltpetre-refiners; there are also numerous vegetable and fruit-sellers, grocers, toddy-sellers, cotton-weavers, tailors, gold and silversmiths, ironsmiths, potters, carpenters, basket and mat-makers, and shoe-makers. Of the professional classes, 46 per cent. are actual workers, including 2,000 priests and 2,000 religious mendicants. Among those engaged in other occupations are 4,000 herdsmen, 6,000 ordinary beggars and 138,000 general labourers.

The proportion of persons engaged in industrial occupations is far lower in North Bihār than it is in the trans-Gangetic districts, but nowhere in the Patna Division is it lower than in Muzaffarpur. Native handicrafts have, in fact, not found the same home in the districts to the north as in those to the south of the Ganges; and it has been suggested that the reason for this is that after the murder of Alamgīr and the fall of Delhi in 1759 many of the Muhammadan nobility attached to the Mughal court retired to the *jāgīrs* that had been granted to them in the latter districts, bringing in their train large numbers of artificers, while the districts to the north of the Ganges were still in an unsettled state, sparsely populated, and only partially cultivated. However that may be, the bulk of the industrial community are engaged merely in supplying the simple needs of a rural people. Manufactures, in the proper MANUFACTURES.

sense of the word, are few in number and of little significance, with the exception of those which are organized by Europeans and supplied with European capital. Indeed, the only great industries of the district are the manufacture of indigo, which is almost entirely in the hands of Europeans, the manufacture of sugar, which is being revived by them owing to the decline of indigo, and the manufacture of saltpetre, which they originally monopolized. The way in which these industries have been developed by European enterprise is curiously illustrated by the history of the Singiā factory. This was built on the banks of the Gandak by the Dutch in the days of their predominance; it was next utilized by the East India Company as for the manufacture of saltpetre, and then became the head-quarters of an indigo concern.

Indigo industry.

The indigo industry will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Sugar manufacture.

In Mr. Stevenson-Moore's Settlement Report it is stated that the only thānas containing more than 1 per cent. of the net cropped area under sugarcane in 1897 were Lālganj and Mahuwā, and there it was little more than the survival of an industry whose glory had departed, but which flourished in the preceding century. During the first half of the 19th century the manufacture, which the Dutch had fostered, continued to thrive: some of the factories now manufacturing indigo were, in fact, originally built in connection with the sugar industry; and the cultivation of sugarcane was extensive. About the year 1850, however, the high prices obtained for indigo dealt a fatal blow to the industry, and the sugar factories were converted into indigo concerns. The pendulum has now swung back, and the manufacture of refined sugar on an extensive scale is one of the immediate results of the decline of the indigo industry. The resuscitation of the sugar industry in Bihār has been pioneered by the India Development Company, which acquired in 1900-01 the well-known indigo factories of Ottur (Athar) and Agrail in this district for the purpose of cultivating sugarcane. The head factory of the Company is at Ottur, and there are branch factories at Sirāha in Champāran and at Barhogā in Sāran. Cane-crushing mills and sugar-refining plant of the most modern type were erected in 1902-03, which are reported to be capable of crushing 75,000 tons of cane in 100 working days and of refining about 14,000 tons of sugar during the remainder of the year. Twelve Europeans and 500 to 600 natives a day are employed in the factories during the cane-crushing season, and 10 Europeans and many thousands of natives throughout the year on the cultivation

of the estate and the manufacture of sugar; besides this, the neighbouring planters contract to grow sugarcane and sell it to the Company. It is claimed that the sugar turned out is of the best quality, and that a ready sale for it has been found in the towns of Northern India. The industry is still in an experimental stage, but it is hoped that the mills will soon be fully employed and the industry placed on a sound economic basis.

The results of the working of 1903-04 were disappointing, due, as the Agent explains, "to the short supply of cane available for manufacture, the reason being lack of moisture and short rainfall in 1903, giving a light crop on a restricted cultivation owing to the lack of a sufficiency of good seed of the best varieties, and the necessity of completely eradicating small native varieties of cane in favour of the larger kinds. The increase of cultivation necessary to the production of a crop capable in future of keeping the mills fully supplied with cane for the entire period of working caused a considerable portion of the crop to be used for seed purposes for the coming season." The results of the next season's working (1904-05) were far more successful. The area under cane of good varieties had been largely increased, the season was on the whole favourable, and the year's working showed a total of 21,550 tons of cane crushed, with 1,812 tons of sugar and 588 tons of molasses (*gur*) made in the head factory at Ottur alone. Government has come to the assistance of the new industry in the matter of irrigation; experiments have been made as to the most suitable varieties of seed; and the construction of the new branch line of the Bengal and North-Western Railway from Silaut to Ottur will enable the Company to largely extend its area of cultivation.

Saltpetre manufacture.

In Bihār, which is the chief source of saltpetre in India, the conditions for the natural production of the compound closely approach the theoretical ideal. With a population exceeding 500 per square mile, where agriculture is the chief occupation, and where consequently the people are accompanied by a high proportion of domestic animals, there is an abundant supply of organic nitrogen to the soils around villages. The climatic conditions of temperature and humidity are also unusually favourable for the growth of so-called nitrifying bacteria, which convert ammonia by successive stages into nitrous and nitric acid. Wood and cow-dung are largely used for fuel, and the immediate vicinity of each village thus forms a perfect laboratory for the formation of potassium nitrate. In the long period of continuous surface desiccation, which follows a small monsoon rainfall, the compounds so formed in the soil are brought to the surface by capillary

action, and appear as a white efflorescence of dried salt, which is collected and purified for export as saltpetre.

Before the discovery of large deposits of sodium nitrate in Chili, when potassium nitrate formed an essential constituent of the only explosive used in large quantities, the saltpetre production added to the political importance of the country, and the great fluctuations in the price of the salt gave rise to heavy speculations during periods of international complications. A system which provided for the control of manufacture and sale of salt by the agency of the Company's servants was accordingly introduced by Clive and Warren Hastings in 1765—80, and the production of saltpetre in Tirhut long continued to be supervised by Europeans. In Walter Hamilton's Description of Hindustan (1820) it is said that the greater part of the saltpetre intended for the Company's investment was procured from Hājīpur and the adjacent division of Sāran; and as late as 1847 there were four factories under European supervision in Tirhut. The fall of prices caused the Europeans who formerly engaged in the trade to withdraw their capital, and the manufacture is now entirely in the hands of natives. It is a declining industry, and the outturn has steadily decreased of late years. A series of bad seasons, combined with low prices in Calcutta, has had an injurious effect on the manufacture, and many refineries have been closed. The outturn of saltpetre has accordingly fallen gradually from 110,000 maunds in 1895-96 to 69,000 maunds in 1904-05, and that of the salt educed during the manufacture has fallen in the same period from 5,600 maunds to 4,500 maunds. The annual outturn is still, however, larger than in any other Bihār district.

The manufacture, which is in the hands of a poor but hardy caste called Nuniās, is founded on a system of advances made to them by middlemen, who again contract with the larger houses of business in Calcutta. It is controlled by the Northern India Salt Department, which grants licenses for refining salt, for making crude saltpetre, and for the manufacture of the unrefined saltpetre called *khārī*. The process of manufacture is simple, and the implements employed are very primitive. Manufacture is carried on in small factories situated in the towns and villages scattered over the country. Nitrous soil is collected from the vicinity of the village inhabitations and is lixiviated in small earthen filters. The nitrous brine is next concentrated in iron or earthen vessels with the aid of artificial heat, and saltpetre is obtained by crystallization, as the temperature of the concentrated liquid falls. The saltpetre so obtained is impure in quality, as it contains earthy matter and foreign salts (such as chloride

of sodium) in mechanical admixture. This impure saltpetre is collected in refineries situated at different points among the village works, and is purified in them to a fair degree of refraction, and is then sent to Calcutta, whence some of it is exported, while some is purified to a higher degree of refraction in the local refineries.

Other industries. The other industries are of little importance and consist merely of small village handicrafts. The cotton-weaving industry is almost extinct owing to the competition of cheap Manchester piece-goods, but the local weavers still turn out a considerable quantity of coarse cloth, which is taken by the poorer classes on account of its durability and warmth. Calico printing is also carried on locally. Coarse woollen blankets and carpets are woven by the shepherd caste, the Gareris, especially in the Muzaffarpur and Pāro thānas, and the manufacture of carpets is carried on to a small extent in the Sursand thāna. In the south of the district there are a number of carpenters who make *pālkis*, cart-wheels and other articles of general use. Rough cutlery is produced at Lāwārpur in the Hājīpur subdivision, and at Lālganj hookah stems are turned and exported in fair quantities. Mats and baskets are made all over the district by Doms, and the Sītāmarhi subdivision has a reputation all over North Bihār for the manufacture of good bamboo sieves.

Factories. There are only two factories registered under the Factories Act—the sugar factory at Ottur mentioned above, which in 1904 employed a daily average of 165 persons, and the engineering workshops of Messrs. Arthur Butler & Co. at Muzaffarpur. The latter are worked by steam and are engaged in supplying and maintaining the engines used in indigo factories. The average daily number of employés in 1904 was 107.

Trade. The principal exports are indigo, oil-seeds, saltpetre, hides, *ghī*, tobacco, opium, fruit and vegetables. The main imports are salt, European and Indian cotton piece-goods and hardware, coal and coke, kerosine-oil, cereals, such as maize, millets, etc., rice and other food-grains, and indigo seed. The rail-borne exports amounted to 21$\frac{7}{8}$ lakhs of maunds in 1904-05, among which rice, linseed and tobacco bulked largest with 7 lakhs, 5$\frac{4}{5}$ lakhs and 2$\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs of maunds, respectively. The imports in the same year aggregated 16$\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs of maunds, the principal imports being rice and other food-grains, salt, coal and coke, and kerosine-oil. The quinquennium, 1900-01 to 1904-05, shows an increase of 14·7 per cent. in the volume of trade, as compared with the preceding quinquennium, the increase being almost entirely in exports; and Muzaffarpur now contributes one-tenth of the total trade of the Division.

Most of the products find their way to Calcutta, and the bulk of the trade is carried by the railway. Formerly goods were sent direct to Calcutta by the Little Gandak, the Bāghmati and the Ganges in the rainy season; while in the dry-weather months, when the Great Gandak alone was open for navigation by large craft, the main stream of trade followed its course to Patna and thence to Calcutta. Now that the river routes have been replaced by the railway as the channels of trade, the old river-marts show a tendency to decline, unless they happen to be situated on the line of railway, like Mehnār, Bhagwānpur and Bairagniā, which are steadily growing in importance. Nepāl exports to Muzaffarpur food-grains, oil-seeds, timber, skins of sheep, goats and cattle, and saltpetre, and receives in return sugar, salt, tea, utensils, kerosine-oil, spices and piece-goods. A considerable cart traffic thus goes on from and to Nepāl, and there is also some cart traffic between Sāran and the north of the district; the former is carefully registered at Bairagniā, Belā, Majorganj, Sonbarsā and Sursand, four stations on the frontier commanding the principal trade routes.

The chief centres of trade are Muzaffarpur on the Little Gandak, which is navigable in the rains for boats of about 37 tons up to Muzaffarpur, Hājīpur, now a large railway centre, Lālganj, a river-mart on the Great Gandak, Sītāmarhi, a big rice mart, Bairagniā and Sursand, the great marts for the Nepāl trade, and Mehnār, Sāhibganj, Sonbarsā, Belā, Majorganj, Mahuwā and Kānti. The trade of the district is in the hands of Mārwāris and local Baniyā castes.

Fairs.

The principal fair is the Rāmnavamī fair held at Sītāmarhi in March, at which there is generally an attendance of about 80,000 persons. It is essentially a cattle fair, some 30,000 cattle being brought for sale, and prizes given for the cattle exhibited, but merchandise of all kinds is also sold. Two other fairs, held in November at Konharaghāt in the Hājīpur thāna and at Gopālpur Ganināth in the Mehnār outpost, each attract about 50,000 people; they are primarily bathing festivals and are known as the Gandak Asnān.

Weights and measures.

There is no uniform system of weights and measures in Muzaffarpur. The standard seer of 80 *tolās* is recognized in the municipalities and in large trade marts, but in the villages the *kachchā* seer is used, *i.e.*, a seer equivalent to either 48 or 52 *tolās*; occasionally also a seer of 56 or 64 *tolās* is used. For gold, silver, opium and *gānja*, the following table is observed: 4 *dhān*=1 *ratī*; 8 *ratī*=1 *māshā*; 10½ *māshā* = 1 *tolā*. There are several measures of capacity, which vary according to the

commodity measured. The seer is regarded as equal to one quart, but the unit is the *phuchiā*, which is generally equivalent to about one-fifth of a quart. Measures of length similarly vary; the cloth yard may be 36 or 40 inches; the *hāth* or cubit is generally 18 inches; and for land the *laggi* is used, which varies from 5 *hāths*, 5 fingers to 7 *hāths*, though the standard *laggi* is 6 *hāths* or 9 feet.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIGO INDUSTRY.

PROGRESS OF THE INDUSTRY. INDIGO was a product of North Bihār long before the advent of the British, but its cultivation by European methods appears to have been started by Francois Grand, the first Collector of Tirhut. Writing in 1785, three years after his appointment as Collector, he claims to have been the pioneer of the industry, and says :— "I introduced the manufacturing of indigo after the European manner, encouraged the establishment of indigo works and plantations, and erected three at my own expense." It is at least from this time that the manufacture of indigo began to develop into an industry, and to attract European enterprise. In 1788 there were 5 Europeans in possession of indigo works ; in 1793 the number of factories had increased to nine, situated at Dāūdpur, Saraiyā, Dhūli, Ottur (Athar), Shāhpur, Kānti, Motīpur, Deoriā and Banarā ; and by the year 1803 altogether 25 factories had been established in Tirhut. During these early days the industry was directly fostered by the East India Company, and special permission had to be obtained by Europeans wishing to engage in it. In 1802, however, the Board of Directors passed orders that no further advances or other pecuniary encouragement should be given to the planters, as the large profits obtained from the sale of the product made such aid unnecessary. Indigo accordingly became an independent and self-supporting industry, the pioneer planting industry in Bengal.

Its progress in Tirhut during the next few years was rapid, though there appear to have been many failures, probably owing to over-production. In a report submitted in 1810 the Collector stated that, taking one year with another, the district seldom sent less than 10,000 maunds of indigo to Calcutta for export to Europe ; that 30,000 to 50,000 souls received their principal support from the factories ; and that on the average each factory disbursed from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 30,000 per annum in hard cash to the labourers and cultivators for some miles round the various concerns. He estimated that in this way not less than six or seven lakhs of rupees were circulated every year by the planters

in Tirhut, and urged that the advantages of the industry to the labouring classes were so great that Government should encourage it in every possible way. "Let the speculator win or lose," he wrote, "acquire a princely fortune or die a pauper, the district is equally benefited by his industry, and his struggles for prosperity do rarely succeed. Some of the planters succeed, but the majority of them fail." Difficulties appear to have arisen later through the competition of rival concerns, and in 1828 the Collector represented that indigo cultivation had extended so greatly that some restriction on it was desirable for the benefit of the district. "From the misunderstanding," he wrote, "which has prevailed and still prevails amongst the European planters, disputes with one another are of very frequent occurrence: disputes have, however, of late occurred through descendants of Europeans embarking in indigo cultivation, worked chiefly, if not entirely, by native agency. For the peace of the district and welfare of the established planters, it therefore appears highly desirable that the Government restrictions regarding the erection of factories by Europeans should be extended to the descendants of Europeans, and power be vested in the Magistrate to prevent engagements for the cultivation of indigo plant by other than the proprietor or proprietors of one established factory."

In 1850 there were no less than 86 factories in Tirhut, several of which were used for the manufacture of sugar, but about this time sugar was finally superseded by indigo as the European industry of the district, and many refineries were converted into indigo concerns. Difficulties were at one time threatened by the feeling of tension between the ryots and the factories produced by certain abuses which had crept into the system of cultivation; but the danger was averted by the planters themselves, who in 1877 formed the Bihār Planters' Association in order to put matters on a satisfactory footing.

Since that time the area under cultivation appears to have been steadily on the increase until the discovery of the Badische artificial dye. In 1897 it amounted to 87,258 acres or 5·62 of the cultivated area of the district, and in that year the Settlement Officer enumerated 23 head factories, with an average of three outworks under each, belonging to the Bihār Indigo Planters, Association, besides 9 independent factories; while the industry was estimated to give employment throughout the year to 15 per cent. of the labouring classes. Since then the industry has suffered from the competition of the artificial dye in Europe and from the high prices of food-grains and the consequent demand for land in Bihār. The price of the natural dye has fallen

rapidly, and the area under cultivation has diminished, being estimated at 35,000 acres in 1904, while the final forecast of the indigo crop in Bengal returned the area sown in 1905 as only 25,000 acres. Government has come to the aid of the planters with substantial grants for scientific research, the aim of which is to ascertain whether it is possible to increase the outturn and quality of the dye at a cheaper cost; excellent work in the chemistry, bacteriology and agriculture of indigo has been done and is still progressing; and every effort is being made to improve the quality of the plant by importing fresh seed from Natal. But so far these experiments have not succeeded in arresting the decay of the industry. The price obtained for indigo is barely sufficient to cover the cost of production, and many factories are either closing altogether or are reducing the area cultivated with indigo, growing in its place sugar, cotton, and country crops. The figures given below show sufficiently clearly how greatly the outturn has decreased in consequence of these adverse conditions—

YEAR.	Outturn.	Value.	Price per maund.
	Mds.	Rs.	Rs.
1895—1900 (average) ...	14,573	27,14,800	186
1900-01	14,185	19,85,900	140
1904-05	4,045	6,06,750	150

CULTIVATION. The land on which indigo is to be grown is prepared for sowing as soon as the *kharif* crops are reaped, as it is of great importance that the soil should retain the moisture supplied by the rainfall in October and November. The land is ploughed and reploughed until the clods are all pulverized, and after being manured, is levelled and smoothed with a plank roller composed of a long heavy beam on which two men stand. The seed is sown at the beginning of the hot weather, as soon as the nights begin to get warm, a special drill, with coulters about 5 or 6 inches apart, being used for the purpose ; and after sowing, the roller is again used to level the surface. The seedlings are very delicate until their roots are well developed, and many perish owing to dry west winds ; but moist east winds after sowing, and spring showers later, are very beneficial to the young plants. They make slow progress until the monsoon sets in, when the growth becomes very rapid; and they are ready for cutting, which takes place

immediately before they flower, in July or August. A second crop is obtained in September, but usually yields less than the first crop, the average outturn of which is 80 to 120 maunds of green plant per acre; the yield of 100 maunds of good plant should be about 10 seers of indigo.

Indigo may follow indigo, but is more generally rotated with such crops as sugarcane, poppy, tobacco, cereals and oil-seeds. It is usually grown on high lands beyond the reach of floods; the soils are necessarily varied in character and composition, but deep alluvium loams seem to suit the crop best. Many soils of this description are deficient in phosphoric acid and nitrogen, but are generally rich in other useful constituents; while extensive experiments have proved that superphosphate and nitrate of potash can be economically applied to them. The refuse indigo plant (*sith*) is the manure most easily obtained, and is very valuable; but it is less suited for indigo itself than for rotation crops, such as sugarcane, tobacco, poppy, cereals and oil-seeds. It produces heavy crops of indigo, but the leaf is deficient in colouring matter; and indigo grown on land heavily treated with *sith* is liable to injury from insect-pests. **Soils and manures.**

The seed used in Tirhut comes for the most part from the United Provinces, as there is a general belief that the best seed is obtainable there, and that local seed does not keep good from season to season and does not germinate properly. The system of getting seed in this way, without any special selection, has caused deterioration in the varieties generally grown, and there is little doubt that the plant commonly cultivated does not now produce a satisfactory amount of dye matter, particularly on worn-out indigo lands. The chief cultivated form is *Indigofera sumatrana*, which was introduced about 150 years ago, and not *Indigofera tinctoria*, as was formerly supposed. **Seed.**

Within recent years Natal indigo (*Indigofera arrecta*) has been introduced, the seed being obtained direct from Natal and also from plants acclimatized in Java. This plant has been found to give a very considerable increase of colouring matter from the unit area of land. It has a much more vigorous habit of growth than the old variety, and the leaf contains a larger proportion of the colour-yielding principle. It appears to be eminently suited to the soils and climate of Bihar, and farms have now been established in three districts for the cultivation of its seed on an extended scale.

The colouring matter from which indigotin is derived exists almost entirely in the leaf of the plant. It increases as the plant grows, but deteriorates after a certain stage, and harvesting and **Colouring matter.**

steeping have therefore to be carried on expeditiously. Plants which have been cut some time and become blackened by heating in bulk contain very little dye matter, so that the green plant cannot be carted very far. A plant which is forced by manure to very active growth also gives a poor percentage of dye matter.

MANUFACTURE. Steeping. When cut the leaves are taken to the factory, and are there steeped in large vats until fermentation is complete. The old system of manufacture requires two sets of vats, the vats on the higher level being used for steeping the plant, which is kept submerged by logs of wood or bars fixed in position. During this process active fermentation takes place through the action of soluble ferments (enzymes), causing the formation of a compound which is easily convertible into indigotin by the action of air. The period of steeping varies with the temperature of the air and water. If the temperature of the water is 90° to 92° F., steeping for 10 hours is sufficient, but instead of varying the time, it is preferable to heat the water in the reservoir to a definite temperature. It has been found that when the plant is steeped in water at 150° to 160° F., the colouring principle is extracted in half an hour, and indigo made in this way is superior in quality, containing about 75 per cent. of indigotin.

Oxidation or beating process. When fermentation is complete, the liquid in the steeping vats, which varies in colour from bright orange to olive green, is drained off into the lower oxidizing vats, and is there subjected to a brisk beating, the effect of which is to cause oxidation and separate the particles of dye. As the oxidation proceeds, dark blue particles of indigotin appear in the liquid, and the beating is continued until a little of the liquid placed in a saucer readily throws a dark blue precipitate. If there is any delay in oxidation, there is a considerable loss of colouring matter, and the indigo produced is inferior. Oxidation was at one time accomplished by hand-beating, but in most Bihār factories it is now done by a beating wheel worked by power from a central engine.

Lime and ammonia process. The improved method of treating the plant known as Coventry's lime and acid process requires a vat intermediate between the steeping and beating vat. Lime is added to the indigo liquor, and a precipitate of calcium and magnesium carbonates then forms, which also carries down various other impurities. The cleared liquor, when run off into a lower vat and oxidized, yields indigo of good quality, and a substantial increase of colouring matter is obtained. An ammonia gas process patented by Mr. Rawson in 1901 also produces a direct increase of colouring matter.

Finally, the sediment (known as *māl*) is boiled, strained and made up into cakes for the market. The precipitate which settles after oxidation is first boiled, and the dye matter is then placed on a cloth strainer until it becomes fairly dry. It is then carried to the press and subjected to gradually increasing pressure until it has taken the form of firm slabs, which are cut into cakes and slowly dried on racks. Good indigo should be bright and of a dark blue colour, with a coppery gloss, and should contain 60 per cent. or more of indigotin. **Boiling and final preparation.**

In the course of the last survey and settlement operations it was ascertained that, in their capacity as superior landlords, the indigo factories held 17·59 per cent. of the district area, but that their landed interests were secure only in a little over 2 per cent., which they held as proprietors or permanent tenure-holders. The reason for this is that a factory has seldom an opportunity of buying an estate with lands situated conveniently for its purposes, as the sale of estates is regarded as a social disgrace only to be resorted to in the last extremity; while the practice of granting permanent leases has almost entirely died out with the rise in the value of land. Factories are, therefore, mainly dependent on temporary leases for acquiring interests in villages in which they wish to extend or maintain the cultivation of indigo. **LANDED INTERESTS.**

Such leases are granted as security for mortgages or are simple farming leases (*thīkā*). The latter, which are also called *khushk-patta*, are due to the financial embarrassment of proprietors and to their desire to avoid the troubles of management. The term of the lease may vary from 5 to 20 years, and its renewal is generally made an opportunity for increasing the rent. These *thīkā* leases are the commonest of all; and it is to the *thīkā* system and to its influence as landlord that the factory owes the strength of its position.

The other class of leases common in the district consists of usufructuary mortgages, under which the factory grants a loan at a moderate rate of interest and receives the land of an embarrassed proprietor as security. Leases of this kind are either *zarpeshgī* or *sadua patua*. In the former case the interest on the loan is paid yearly by deducting it from the rent, and the principal is repayable on the expiry of the lease; in the latter both principal and interest are liquidated by deduction from the yearly rent due to the proprietor. It pays the factories to invest money in this way, as it gives them a footing in the villages, and, the mortgagors being generally unable to repay, the lease gives the planter greater security for his continuance in possession.

In some cases factories take a lease of an under-tenure, this lease being known as *katkanā*, *e.g.*, if two factories quarrel about their respective jurisdictions, a sublease from one to the other generally forms the basis of a compromise. Again, a proprietor is prepared to grant a lease of his estate to a factory on condition that it takes the whole, but part may fall within the jurisdiction of another factory. In such a case, the good services of the Indigo Planters' Association are called in to arrange for the latter factory taking a sublease from the former, and thus the danger of friction is avoided.

Occasionally the factory acquires land as an under-ryot under what are called *kurtaulī* leases. These correspond to the *sadua patua* leases granted by proprietors to tenure-holders; the factory gives the ryot an advance of so many years rental of the land taken up, and in return is allowed to cultivate the land for that period, giving it back to the ryot on its expiry. *Kurtaulī* leases are generally executed for part-holdings only, and the ryot remains in the village, cultivating the portion which he has not sublet to the factory. An analogous form of mortgage is the *sud-bharna*, in which, as in a *zarpeshgī* tenure, the factory gives an advance on which the interest only is liquidated by deduction from the annual rent for the land sublet, the factory retaining possession until the principal is repaid.

SYSTEMS OF CULTIVATION.

Zirāat.

The three main systems of indigo cultivation are commonly called *zirāat* or direct cultivation by means of hired servants, *āsāmīwār* or cultivation through factory tenants, and *khushkī* or cultivation through outside ryots. The term *zirāat* includes all land in the direct occupation of the factory, whether held by it as proprietor, tenure-holder, ryot or under-ryot. Altogether 61½ per cent. of the area under indigo is *zirāat*, out of which the factories hold 38½ per cent. under *thīkā* leases, and have therefore only a temporary landlord interest; in 11 per cent. the factories have the rights of ryots or under-ryots; and in practically all the remainder they have a permanent landlord interest as proprietors or permanent tenure-holders (*mukararidārs*).

Asāmīwār.

When the system of *āsāmīwār* cultivation is followed, the indigo is grown by the factory tenants at fixed rates per *bīgha*. Generally documents, called *sattas*, are executed, the ryot receiving an advance and binding himself to grow indigo on a certain specified portion of his holding, and to pay damages if he should fail to carry out his agreement All the expenses of cultivation are paid by the ryot, but the seed is given by the factory, which also cuts and carts away the indigo, the ryot being paid for the indigo at a rate fixed by the Indigo Planters' Association.

Agreements executed by ryots who are not the tenants of the factory are called *khushkī sattas* or voluntary agreements. In this case the factory merely supplies the seed and pays for the crop when delivered; it sometimes also gives an advance to the cultivator at a light rate of interest. The amount of *khushkī* cultivation in Muzaffarpur is small, as, if it is to pay, indigo requires selected lands, carefully cultivated, and rotated in an intelligent manner. These conditions are all wanting in the *khushkī* system; the rate of remuneration has to be high in order to induce the outside ryot to grow indigo; and the factory therefore cannot afford this system of cultivation. *Khushkī.*

Regarding the general effect of the industry on the district, the following opinion of the Settlement Officer may be quoted:—"That a district should contain a large community of honourable English gentlemen joined together by a common bond of interest, anxious and prompt to devote their time and energies to the service of Government in times of danger and difficulty, is a source of political and administrative strength too obvious to require more than a passing notice." After reviewing the relations between the indigo concerns and the zamīndārs and ryots, he sums up the position as follows:—"My general conclusions are that the indigo industry confers a very material benefit on the district. It has saved many a proprietor from inevitable ruin; it has brought immense profits to the poorest and most depressed portion of the population; the political and administrative advantages that accrue to the Government cannot admit of question. Against these advantages are to be set the possible disadvantages, and perhaps, in isolated cases, hardships of the *satta* system to a very limited portion of the cultivating classes. The aggregate balance of advantage is clearly on the side of the indigo industry." "The agricultural classes," he says, "have the advantage of knowing the ordinary indigo-planter to be a good and considerate landlord. It is an axiom of the Association that the successful concern is the one on good terms with its tenants. The general tone in this respect is thoroughly sound and good, and Government, the indigo community itself, and the cultivator are largely indebted to the Indigo Planters' Association for its introduction, as well as for the cordial relations that exist between indigo-managers and the local administration." INFLUENCE OF THE INDUSTRY.

The present state of affairs is in striking contrast to that previously existing, some idea of which may be gathered from the account of the origin of the Association given in the Bengal Administration Report of 1877-78. According to this account, a report submitted by the Commissioner of Patna conclusively THE BIHAR PLANTERS' ASSOCIATION.

showed that the system of cultivation then prevailing involved an amount of lawlessness and oppression, principally in the shape of extorted agreements to cultivate and of seizure of ploughs and cattle, which could not be tolerated. On receipt of this report, some of the leading planters as well as the officials of Bihār were consulted through the Commissioner. It was important to do nothing which would unduly excite the mind of the ryots, and to avoid any such agitation as might lead to breaches of contract and the general embitterment of the relations between planters and ryots; and as some of the leading planters declared themselves sensible of the necessity of reform and willing to assist in the work, and for this purpose undertook the establishment of a Planters' Association, action on the part of Government was postponed and the matter was entrusted to their hands. This body showed a sincere desire to place the relations between planters and ryots on a more satisfactory footing, and drew up a series of rules embodying very important reforms for the guidance of the members of the Association. The remarks quoted above show that since that time it has been successful in maintaining friendly relations both with the cultivators and Government; and that it has helped greatly in advancing the development and prosperity of the district. This is the more satisfactory when it is remembered that the cultivation of indigo is not very popular with the ryot, as though it is raised on only a small proportion of his holding, indigo is not so remunerative as other crops which he might grow on the same land; he does not like the constant worry of being supervised by the factory servants, and there is consequently the risk of friction with the factory. On the other hand, the planters have consistently shown themselves true friends to the cultivators and labourers in periods of adversity. Their readiness to help the latter was very clearly shown in the last famine of 1896-97, and the value of their services at this time of distress may be gathered from the remarks of the Commissioner, who wrote—"The planting community, as in 1873-74, proved to be of inestimable value in the crisis. In the former year many of these were stimulated by the prospects of pecuniary advantage; in 1896-97 no such stimulus was offered; but at an early stage of the operations their services were offered gratuitously—an offer which they more than redeemed. Numbers of them sacrificed time, ease and health to assist Government, and many of them have been losers by their public-spirited efforts. Yet the work has been cheerfully done, and the community have once more proved themselves invaluable to the administration."

The following is a list of the factories in the district with their outworks:— FACTORIES.

HEAD-QUARTERS SUBDIVISION.

Factories.	Outworks.
Bhikhanpur	Bochahā. Jhapahā. Sahajpur. Simrāhā.
Dāūdpur	Arijpur. Chhājan. Musahri.
Deoriā	Karamwāri. Majhauliā. Sherpur.
Dhūli	Barauli. Sakri. Sarbnāhā.
Kānti	Lautan. Nariār. Raghai.
Karnaul	Gaurā. Manāin. Tājpur.
Motipur	Bariārpur. Chaklahran. Jagannāthpur. Murārpur.
Ottur (Athar) ..	Ghosrāmā. Hasnā. Muhammadpur.
Mahual.	
Pirakpur.	
Saraiyā	Azizpur. Karneji. Kewālpura. Muhammadpur.
Thikahā	Pakri. Godai.

HAJIPUR SUBDIVISION.

Factories.	Outworks.
Agrail	Belā. Dubahā.
Bhatauliā	Rāmdāspur.
Chaksikandar.	
Chhitwārā	Bishunpur. Harpur (Sulkhani).
Karhari.	
Kutubpur	Chaptā. Dharampur.
Miān Chhaprā.	
Pokhrairā.	
Shāhpur Mirchā.	

SITAMARHI SUBDIVISION.

Factories.	Outworks.
Baluāhā.	
Belsand	Belāhi. Bhagwānpur.
Dumrā	Bokrāhā. Narkatiā. Panchhaur.
Runi Saiyadpur.	

CHAPTER X.

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

The district is well supplied with means of communication. From Muzaffarpur itself radiate three lines of railway—one running north-west to Motīhāri, the second south-east to Darbhangā, and the third south to Hājīpur; while the Darbhangā-Bairagniā branch traverses the centre of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, and the Hājīpur-Bhawāra branch the south of the Hājīpur subdivision. Several rivers are navigable; the Ganges on the south is a great artery of commerce; and boats of 1,000 maunds burden canpass up the Gandak and Little Gandak. The road system is good and sufficient, especially in the head-quarters and Sītāmarhi subdivisions—a result due in a large measure to the fact that famine labour has been used to make new roads and improve old ones; and, but for the fact that some of the roads are unbridged, they would leave little to be desired.

Roads. North Bihār has been well provided with roads ever since it began to attract European enterprise in the early days of British administration. With lucrative industries worked by European capital, it was only natural that careful attention should be given to this means of communication; and the following extract from a report written by the Collector of Tirhut in 1829 shows that even at that date Muzaffarpur had no lack of roads, largely owing to the activity of the planters, but that they were far from being in the same state of efficiency as at present. "The roads," he wrote, "are not under my control, but under that of the Magistrate, who usually repairs them with his prisoners as far as they can conveniently be sent. The zamindars do little or nothing in that way. The roads in the immediate vicinity of the different indigo factories are usually in good order, but they are kept so solely at the expense of the proprietors of the factories. The roads in most directions from Muzaffarpur are in good order, but the roads or byeways in the interior of the district are very bad and barely passable for hackeries. There are a number of streams and *jheels* in the district, wherefore bullocks are not much used: hackeries are, however, used near

the indigo factories, and occasionally towards the northward, but the wear and tear of the same is great in consequence of the usually bad state of the roads. Owing to the number of streams much of the produce of the district is conveyed by water. Where the roads are good, it is either owing to their being repaired by the Magistrate or by the planters."

A District Committee for Tirhut was created in 1870 for the administration of the funds set apart for the construction, repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, etc., which were mainly derived from the road cess. When the district of Muzaffarpur was formed in 1875 with a separate Road Cess Committee, there were 719 miles of roads, many of which had been constructed during the famine of 1874. Ten years later the length of the roads had increased to 1,483 miles, and by 1895 nearly 200 more miles had been added to the mileage under the control of the District Board, bringing the total length up to 1,679 miles.

The District Board now maintains 1,226 miles of district roads, of which 82 miles are metalled, besides 543 miles of village roads. Much has been done of late years in the repair, raising and metalling of old roads, the making of new ones, and the construction of bridges. The District Board has also paid special attention to the extension of roads as feeders to railways and to the maintenance of existing feeder roads; over half a lakh of rupees being spent in this direction during the quinquennium ending in 1904-05. The aggregate expenditure on original works during the same period was Rs. 5,38,000 and on repairs Rs. 3,14,500—a total greater than that for any other district in the Division. The average annual expenditure is, therefore, over Rs. 1,70,000, as compared with Rs. 20,000 in 1876-77 and Rs. 1,03,000 in 1886-87.

At the present time, the roads are extremely good, and there are few districts that can compare with it in this respect. The system of roads is very extensive and convenient, and generally speaking they are in a state of excellent repair. The district is fortunate in having a country where very little embanking is required, and throughout the most part of which indigo-planters are found ready to devote much of their time and attention in co-operating with the District Board to maintain their approaches in an efficient state of repair. Though the roads, with the exception of 82 miles, are unmetalled, they are as a rule so well kept that carriages can be driven over them without any severe jolting or discomfort. Stone is not available locally, and where metalling is used, it consists of the nodular limestone called *kankar* laid over a brick bed.

Principal roads.

The most important road is that running from Hājīpur, through the towns of Muzaffarpur and Sītāmarhi, to Sonbarsā, a large mart on the Nepāl frontier. Important roads connect Muzaffarpur town with Darbhangā, Motīhāri and Sāran, 11 main roads in all radiating from Muzaffarpur; and the subdivisional head-quarters of Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi are also connected by good roads with the different police thānas and outposts. Most of the minor rivers are bridged by masonry structures, while the larger ones are generally crossed by ferries, of which there are 67 in the district. The Little Gandak close to Muzaffarpur on the Sītāmarhi road is crossed by a pontoon bridge 850 feet in length.

Road-side arboriculture.

Muzaffarpur is fortunate in having long avenues of trees along many of the roads, thanks to the energy of Mr. C. F. Worseley, a former Collector of the district and the pioneer of road-side arboriculture in Bengal. Between 1877 and 1901 nearly Rs. 69,000 was spent in planting and maintaining trees along the principal roads, and these avenues now extend over a length of 134 miles. At the close of that period it was represented that the trees damaged the roads, absorbing the moisture in the dry weather and preventing the roads from drying up during the rainy season. It was admitted, however, that the argument could not apply to the metalled roads; and road-side arboriculture has accordingly been resumed, the efforts of the District Board being directed mainly to maintaining avenues where they exist and to planting new ones along the metalled roads. There are also a large number of mango groves at convenient distances along the main roads sufficient for the convenience of travellers.

RAILWAYS.

The district is served by four distinct branches of the Bengal and North-Western Railway, known as the Tirhut section, the Hājīpur-Bachwāra branch of the Tirhut section, the Sonpur branch, and the Bairagniā branch of the same section.

The first, which connects Simariā Ghāt on the Ganges with Bettiah in the Champāran district, runs in a south-easterly direction through Muzaffarpur district, passing through the head-quarters town. The second branch enters the district at the Sonpur bridge over the Great Gandak, passes through Hājīpur and runs eastwards to Katihār in Purnea district, where it joins the Eastern Bengal State Railway; it intersects the first branch at Bāruni junction in the Monghyr district. The third runs from Hājīpur to Muzaffarpur town, thus connecting the first two branches. The fourth, which leaves the branch line first mentioned at Samāstipur in Darbhangā district, enters Muzaffarpur district near Kamtaul, passes through Sītāmarhi town, and has

its terminus at Bairagniā. Communication with that place is, at present, kept open only during the dry-weather months by means of a temporary bridge over the Bāghmati, about 3 miles away, but the construction of a permanent structure is contemplated.

These four branches have an aggregate length in the district of 286 miles. The Railway Board have also recently sanctioned surveys, to be made by the agency of the Bengal and North-Western Railway Company, of lines of railway between Muzaffarpur and Muhammadpur and between Muzaffarpur and Sītāmarhi.

WATER COMMUNICATIONS. During the rainy season when the rivers are high, a considerable quantity of traffic is still carried in country boats along the Gandak, Little Gandak and Bāghmati rivers. *Sāl* (*Shorea robusta*) logs from Nepāl are floated down the two latter, and also a large quantity of bamboos. The Ganges on the south is navigable throughout the year, and a daily service of steamers plies to and from Goalundo.

POSTAL COMMUNICATIONS. There are altogether 1,200 miles of postal communication and 65 post-offices in the district, there being thus one post-office for every 46 square miles. The number of postal articles delivered in 1904-05 was 2,431,624, including letters, post-cards, packets, newspapers and parcels; the value of the money-orders issued was Rs. 12½ lakhs and of those paid Rs. 23½ lakhs; and the total amount of Savings Bank deposits was 2 lakhs. There are also 7 telegraph offices, from which 5,176 messages were issued in the year; these offices are situated at Hājīpur, Janakpur Road (Puprī), Kachīsarai, Lālganj, Motīpur, Muzaffarpur and Sītāmarhi.

CHAPTER XI.

LAND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION.

RAL NUE ›RY.

THE first historical assessment of land revenue in Tirhut is that made in 1582 by Todar Mal, the great Finance Minister of Akbar. The result of this assessment was that an area of 817,370 acres in *Sarkārs* Hājīpur and Tirhut was settled at a revenue of Rs. 11,63,020, which gives an incidence of about Re. 1-7 per acre. It is unfortunately impossible to disentangle the figures for the present district of Muzaffarpur, owing to the changes of jurisdiction which have taken place. During the period, close on 200 years, which elapsed between this assessment and the grant of the *Dīwāni* in 1765 to the East India Company, there are two assessments of which we possess statistical knowledge—one made by Shāh Jahān in 1685 and the second in 1750 during the Viceroyalty of Alī Vardi Khān. The result of the first assessment was to raise the revenue to Rs. 17,98,576, *i.e.*, by 55 per cent., while it was lowered by Alī Vardi Khān to Rs. 16,48,142. No records can however be found of the exact areas dealt with, so that we are unable to estimate the incidence upon the actual area cultivated at the time they were made. It appears to have been difficult to ascertain what was the actual state of the revenues when we took over the Province in 1765, and various changes were made in the system of revenue administration up to the date of the decennial settlement of 1790, which was made permanent by Lord Cornwallis in 1793. At this settlement an area of 1,584,836 acres was assessed in Tirhut at Rs. 9,83,642, giving an incidence of 9 annas per acre. During subsequent resumption proceedings a further area of 1,066,001 acres was assessed to a revenue of Rs. 6,77,387, making a total of Rs. 16,61,029. The actually permanently-settled revenue of Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā at the present time is Rs. 17,45,961.

SH IS- N.

When the English assumed the government of the country in 1765, they at first continued the existing system of revenue administration, which the mercantile training of the Company's servants had not qualified them to deal with. In 1769 European Supervisors were appointed to control the native officers, and,

as it was realized that the collection of details regarding the internal resources of the country was a matter of the first importance, they were ordered to enquire into the economic conditions prevailing and the general system of administration. The result of these enquiries was to show that "the whole system resolved itself on the part of the public officers into habitual extortion and injustice, which produced on the cultivators the natural consequences, concealment and evasion, by which Government was defrauded of a considerable portion of its just demands." In 1770 a Revenue Council of Control was established at Patna, and next year the Court of Directors sent out their well-known orders "to stand forth as Dīwān and by the agency of the Company's servants to take upon themselves the entire care and management of the revenues." The direct control of the revenue administration was accordingly entrusted to European officers, but this assumption of direct management having proved a financial failure, the European agency was replaced by native *āmils* under the control of a Provincial Council at Patna. The quinquennial settlement effected in 1772 having also failed to give satisfaction, annual settlements were made from 1778 to 1780; and these settlements with farmers and zamīndārs being equally unsuccessful, Tirhut was for the first time placed under a European Collector in 1782. The first Collector was Francois Grand, but as he proved himself a merchant rather than an administrator, he was removed from his post in 1787.

The first Collector of Tirhut.

The career of Francois Grand,* the first Collector of Tirhut, deserves at least a brief notice. A native of Lausanne, he was educated in his own country, but was sent in early life to England, where he obtained a cadetship in Bengal. He served in the forces of the East India Company until he obtained a captaincy, and in 1776, while on furlough in Europe, he was nominated to a writership. On his return to India, he married the Danish beauty, Mademoiselle Worlée, who afterwards as Madam Grand became so well known for her *liaison* with Sir Philip Francis and her subsequent marriage with Talleyrand. In 1779 Grand brought an action against Francis for misconduct with his wife, and was awarded damages, amounting to Rs. 50,000, by the Judges Impey, Chambers and Hyde. He then obtained a divorce, and in 1782 was appointed Collector of Tirhut, where he engaged in, and practically founded, the indigo industry. He quickly began to make a fortune, but in 1787 Lord Cornwallis, hearing of his commercial enterprises, removed

* The sketch of this adventurer is based on the article on Grand in Buckland's Dictionary of Indian Biography.

him from Tirhut. He was appointed Judge and Magistrate at Patna, warned to give up his indigo concerns, and ultimately removed from the service. After this Grand returned to Europe and made his way to France, where his former wife had married Talleyrand and risen to the position of Princesse de Benevento. Through the influence of Talleyrand, he obtained from the Batavian Republic in 1802 the post of Privy Councillor to the Government of the Cape of Good Hope; and later, when the country passed to the British, he took service under them with an easy adaptability which seems to have been natural to him. He was appointed Inspector of Woods and Lands, married again, and died at the Cape in 1821.

The foregoing sketch sufficiently indicates the character of the first Collector of Tirhut, a foreign adventurer with few scruples and with little sense of honour. The following report, written by him in 1785, is of some interest as it gives an insight into the state of the country and his method of exercising at one and the same time his administrative and commercial abilities. "In 1782," he wrote, "I was transferred by Mr. Hastings from Head Assistant to a commercial factory (in which the duties consisted of prizing cloths, seeing saltpetre weighed or loaded, attending to the accounts, etc.), to the government of two considerable provinces involving the settlement or collection of revenues and maintenance of justice: the provinces were Tirhut and Hajipur. I took possession of a country yielding a revenue of above seven lakhs of rupees, but which had suffered from the depredations committed by those who were compelled to abandon the charge to me, and had besides been in revolt owing to the intrigues of the Raja of Benares, Chet Singh, whose baneful influence had spread so far, and would have spread further had he not been checked in time by Mr. Hastings' wise and spirited measures. I recovered a large balance due from the farmers to Government, quieted and appeased without bloodshed every disturbance, brought back the disobedient to a just sense of their errors, augmented the revenue, introduced the manufacturing of indigo after the European manner, encouraged the establishment of indigo works and plantations, erected three at my own expense, and thus possessed a fortune of £15,000 sterling, looked forward to a proportionate augmentation by continuing in my station and extending my manufactories, which with my houses, lands, furniture, tents, equipages, horses, boats, stood upon a valuation of £10,000 more."

This extract shows the high opinion Grand had of his own abilities, but the protest he made when removed from Tirhut

displays even more clearly his inordinate self-conceit. In this he wrote—"On the 26th August 1787 I was in full possession of my appointment, and my fortune was in that progressive state as described in 1785. I was in the enjoyment of every comfort, elegance, and luxury of life. I was beloved and respected by those living with me, and I will say, because I challenge the contrary to be proved, almost venerated by the natives of every description under my government, whose tears on hearing of my removal accompanied me even from the place of my residence to the bank of the Ganges, where the limits of the district ceased—a distance of 25 miles. On the 27th August 1787, by one stroke of His Lordship's pen, was Mr. Robert Bathurst nominated Collector of Tirhut and Hajipur, and thus every hope and fair-built prospect existing on the preceding day completely blasted. Thus the blow was struck, and from that day I fell, perhaps never more to rise. View the portrait and feel!"

Early Settlements.

The history of revenue administration from 1781 onwards is marked by yearly settlements with zamīndārs, or, if they were recusant, with farmers of the revenue. The correspondence of the period is full of the difficulties the Collector had to meet both in settling and realizing the revenue. Himself ignorant of the capabilities of the soil, his subordinates were a hindrance rather than a help; and the enormous number of petty proprietors, for which the district was even then notorious, made a fair settlement a very difficult task, as they quarrelled and haggled over every detail. The only large proprietor, Rājā Madhu Singh of Darbhangā, contumaciously refused all terms, and did his best, by intimidating the farmers, to prevent them taking settlement of his estates or from collecting rents, if they did take settlement. Imperfect as was the assessment made under such circumstances, the difficulties of collecting it were aggravated by the lawless state of the country, which was infested by bands of robbers, who were generally in collusion with the native *āmils* and did not hesitate on occasion to molest even the European servants of the Company. To the trouble caused by depredating land-owners and contumacious Rājās was added that caused by unfavourable seasons, as scarcely a year passed without the record of some natural calamity. In one year it was drought, in the next it was flood, but in either case the result was the same—settlement-holders unwilling to fulfil their engagements without extreme coercion.

Permanent Settlement.

The history of Tirhut from this time forward until the declaration of the Permanent Settlement discloses persistent and more or less systematic attempts to acquire information regarding the capabilities of the soil, the relations of landlord and tenant, their

status, and similar matters of rural economy; but the methods of enquiry were not sufficiently detailed to afford an adequate basis for a settlement in perpetuity. The result was that when the Permanent Settlement was effected in 1793, no less than 60 per cent. of the area of Tirhut escaped assessment. The total area of the estates assessed to revenue was only 2,476 square miles out of an area of 6,343 square miles, and the total land revenue fixed was Rs. 9,83,642, which gives an incidence of 9 annas an acre; of this about Rs. 4,36,000 represents the demand for the present district of Muzaffarpur. The basis of assessment was however more accurate than in Bengal, as the facilities for obtaining information were greater and the organization of village officials was still effective. The result was that, whereas in Bengal the Permanent Settlement served to confirm as zamīndārs and land-owners men who had been mere rent-collectors under previous administrations, it served in Tirhut to rescue the real zamīndārs from the farmers of revenue who had been placed over them and to restore proprietary rights to those who were about to lose them.

On the other hand, incalculable injury was done to the ryots by the absence of any accompanying measures for their protection and by the harsh provisions of Regulation VII of 1799, which extended to the landlords of Tirhut, as well as of the rest of the Province, the power to distrain the crops of their ryots, and in certain cases to arrest their persons for arrears of rent without any reference to the Courts. Whatever justification there may have been in Bengal for enhancing the power of the landlords in this way, there is no indication that such stringent measures were necessary in Tirhut; and the country has suffered up to the present day from the failure of the earlier administrators to gauge adequately the extent of the oppression practised by the landlords of Tirhut upon their unfortunate tenantry. By slow degrees, the Legislature has been signifying by successive enactments its recognition of the rights of the cultivators, but it was not till the recent introduction of survey and settlement proceedings in Muzaffarpur that the acknowledgement of their rights was brought home to the people themselves.

RESUMPTION PROCEEDINGS.

The principal features in the subsequent revenue history of the district are the resumption of invalid revenue-free grants, the revenue survey of 1843—49, the enormous increase in the number of estates, and the settlement operations of 1892—99. It has already been stated that at the time of the decennial settlement the area of estates assessed to revenue was less than half the area of Tirhut. A large number of estates escaped assessment und

the claim that they were revenue-free grants, of which there was an exceptional number in Tirhut. To quote from Mr. Stevenson-Moore's Settlement Report:—"The free grant of land to Brāhmans for their maintenance, for the encouragement of learning, or for the worship of the gods has always been recognized as a becoming act of piety. Small wonder then that in Mithilā, whose chief claim to a place in history rests on its former influence as a centre of Hindu religion and learning, rent-free grants to the learned and priestly caste were exceptionally abundant. Mithilā, though swept by the successive inroads of invasion and conquest, still retained much of its ancient power as a stronghold of Hinduism; and this was a characteristic of that religion the least likely to succumb to outside attack. Again it was customary in the Mughal era to remunerate all civil and military subordinates by grants of land; so *jāgīrs* and *nankars* grew in great number. Even Akbar had difficulty in controlling the absorption by his servants of lands liable to assessment, and when the Administration grew weak, alienations of revenue-paying lands were carried on wholesale."

The validity of the claims put forward to such revenue-free grants was carefully examined between 1830 and 1850, and active and systematic operations were undertaken for the resumption of those grants that proved to be invalid. In this way, altogether 1,066,000 acres were resumed in Tirhut, and the revenue was increased by Rs. 6,77,387, Muzaffarpur accounting for 44 per cent. (437,226 acres) of the area resumed and for 47 per cent. (Rs. 3,18,366) of the new assessment. As a result of the resumption proceedings, 3,018 new estates were assessed to revenue, and in 1850 the number of estates borne on the revenue-roll of Tirhut was 5,186.

PARTITION.

Since that time, advantage has been taken of the law of partition to a most remarkable extent. By the year 1895 the number of estates on the revenue-roll of Darbhangā and Muzaffarpur amounted to 32,000, while in 1790 the estates on the revenue-roll of the whole of Tirhut was only 1,331, *i.e.*, the number of estates multiplied nearly thirty-fold in a little over a century. It is true that resumptions helped to swell their number before 1850, but, apart from this, the law of partition was responsible for the addition of over 27,500 estates to the revenue-roll of 1790, and the number of estates increased by twenty-fold owing to partitions alone. Muzaffarpur, which has always been a land of petty zamīndāris, accounts for a very large proportion of the increase. In 1790 the number of estates was 799; from 1875 to 1881 alone the addition to their number was 4,046; and

by 1895 there were no less than 19,420 revenue-paying estates. The subdivision of property during the last ten years has gone on with equal rapidity, and in 1904-05 the number of revenue-paying estates had risen to 21,050, a number larger than in any other district in Bengal or Eastern Bengal except Chittagong.

INCIDENCE OF REVENUE.

The rate of revenue is only annas 9-11 per acre, and the average rate of rent on the other hand is Rs. 3-14-8, or more than six times the rate of revenue. The allowance fixed for zamīndārs at the time of the Permanent Settlement was one-tenth of the assets, but their profits are now quite five times what they were then. Thus it can roughly be estimated that the zamīndārs' profits have increased very nearly six-fold since the time of the Permanent Settlement. A vast amount of this increase arose from expansion of cultivation in the first half of the 19th century, but in the second half it was largely due to the enhancement of rent. The total land revenue demand in 1904-05 was Rs. 9,78,596 payable by 21,050 estates, of which all but 49 with a demand of Rs. 16,735 were permanently settled; besides these, there was one Government estate with a demand of Rs. 1,583.

SURVEYS AND SETTLEMENTS.

The first survey carried out in Tirhut was the great revenue survey of 1843-49. This survey resulted in the discovery of land still remaining unassessed, but its chief importance is that it put a stop to the disputes about village boundaries, which had been a fruitful source of litigation and a great administrative difficulty. In Tirhut the survey began in 1846 and was completed in 1849. It showed the area of the district to be 6,114 square miles with 7,586 villages, the land revenue being Rs. 14,62,548 or just under six annas an acre. This was followed by the survey of the *diāra* tracts along the Ganges and Gandak between 1865 and 1868, which added 46 new estates to the revenue-roll. In 1882 experimental settlement operations were begun, Muzaffarpur being selected for the experiment, because it was regarded as one of the least prosperous districts in Bihār and the relations of the people to the land as the least satisfactory. The settlement was carried out successfully in 235 villages, and was terminated in 1886. In 1892 a survey and the preparation of a record of rights were begun in this district and in Champāran, and were brought to a successful conclusion in 1899. These operations were the first undertaken in Bengal for entire districts which came under the Permanent Settlement. The survey showed the area of the district to be 3,035 square miles, with 4,505 villages. Holdings were found to the number of 970,495 with an average size of 1·97 acres, and 4,413,567 plots were measured with an average size of 0·44 of an acre.

The private land of proprietors was found to be 67,729 acres, or nearly 4 per cent. of the area in agricultural occupancy, the average size of these *zirāat* holdings being 1·63 acres, and the land so held being greatest in the thānas where competition for land is keenest. Besides this, the land held by them in direct cultivation, but not true *zirāat*, covered 195,910 acres or 11·5 per cent. of the settled agricultural area, the average size of the holdings being 4·34 acres. Taking both classes of land together, the proprietors occupy nearly 15 per cent. of the occupied area, and the average size of the holding is 3·04 acres. The tenure-holders absorb another 3·7 per cent. with holdings averaging 6·65 acres. This is the largest average holding under any status, and is due to the extensive areas held in direct possession by planters for the cultivation of indigo. Rent-free ryots, on the other hand, with 2·2 per cent., have holdings averaging 1 acre only, the smallest average in the district. Many of them are petty service tenures, and the rest are generally held as charitable or religious endowments by men of high caste, who, being averse to cultivating with their own hands, sublet and thus raise their status to that of tenure-holders.

LANDED INTERESTS.

Ryots at fixed rates occupy 2·2 per cent. of the total occupied area, with holdings averaging 2·50 acres. This is the largest average for ryoti holdings, but the area held by these ryots is appreciable only in Hājīpur, where it is just under 5 per cent. of the occupied area; this is the portion of the district earliest developed, and the position of the cultivators is fairly strong. Settled and occupancy ryots have 82·2 per cent. of the total number of holdings, and occupy 1,270,474 acres, or 74·8 per cent. of the occupied area. The average size of the holding is 1·64 acres, but this is not the average amount of land which the ryot holds for the support of himself and his family. Apart from the fact that he may hold land under another status, he may possess several holdings under one status, and in a district where proprietary interests have been so minutely divided, he generally does so.

Non-occupancy ryots are an insignificant class, as they hold only 1·6 per cent. of the area and 2 per cent. of the number of holdings. The percentage of area held by them is highest in the Hājīpur thāna, where there are many *diāra* lands in their possession, but even there it is only 4 per cent. of the cultivated area. Under-ryots have an interest, nearly always a part interest, in 5·3 per cent. of the holdings, and hold 4·1 per cent. of the occupied area, the average size of the holding being 1·39 acres. Regarding these interests, the Settlement Officer remarks:—"These figures are low enough, but if it is further remembered that a

considerable proportion of even this small number of under-ryots are indigo factories who have taken land from ryots on *kurtauli* leases for the cultivation of indigo, the dangerous inaccuracy of those who believe that land in Tirhut is to a large extent being absorbed by *mahājans* and sublet to the real cultivators at rack-rents, is clearly demonstrated."

Proprietary interests. Owing to the extreme subdivision of property which has taken place, the size of estates has diminished very considerably. In 1870 the average size of an estate in Tirhut was 303 acres, but in the last survey and settlement it was found that the average size of an estate borne on the revenue-roll of Muzaffarpur was only 93 acres, the estate being smaller than in any other district in the Lower Provinces except Cuttack and Balasore. The minuteness of proprietary interests does not end here, for innumerable subdivisions of even these petty estates are common, many of them being split up among different sets of sharers according to a private partition. It was found that there were on the average 5½ estates and 37 proprietors to a village, each holding 12 acres, of which only 9 acres were cultivated. Even without enumerating those who had more than a single interest in one share of an estate, it was ascertained that the average number of proprietors to a joint estate was 5 and to a privately partitioned estate 17; and one case was found in which a village with an area of 179 acres contained 3 estates which had been partitioned by their 159 proprietors into 114 sub-estates.

Though partition has been carried to such extreme lengths, transfers of proprietary interests are comparatively few, largely owing to the presence of indigo-planters in the district. When a zamīndār gets into financial difficulties, he goes to a planter for relief, knowing that the concern will gladly advance him money in order to get a lease of his estate; and in this way many properties are saved from sale. The value of proprietary rights is, moreover, so high that the purchase of them is almost prohibitive. Where sales are effected, the lands generally pass to landlords, and the pleader and money-lender have so far got little hold over the proprietary interests in land.

Tenures. Nearly one-quarter of the district is in the occupation of tenure-holders; but there are few degrees of subinfeudation. Under-tenures occupy only 2 per cent. of the area, the creation of a large number of them being due to the practice of factories taking the *katkanā* leases mentioned in the preceding chapter. Rent-paying tenures occupy the largest area, with 24·6 per cent. of the area brought under settlement; and the holders of these tenures have interests in over one quarter of the separate proprietary

interests in the district. Temporary tenures prevail, only 2·4 per cent. of the total area of the district being occupied by *mukararis*, *i.e.*, by permanent rent-paying tenures. Regarding these tenures, the Settlement Officer observes that where, as in Muzaffarpur, rent rates have risen out of all proportion, proprietors are very averse to granting a *mukarari* lease, and consequently demand very high rates, which will only be paid when the need is very great, *e.g.*, when land is required for the erection of factory buildings.

The proportion of the total area held in temporary tenure (*thīkā*) is 22 per cent., and indigo-planters hold no less than 14 per cent., as the existence of indigo cultivation depends largely on factories obtaining land on temporary leases. Of all the leases in the district, 58·2 per cent. are farming leases, 33·9 per cent. are *zarpeshgī* or mortgage leases, and 7·9 per cent. are of other kinds, most of them being the usufructuary mortgages called *sadua patua*. *Zarpeshgī* leases are most numerous where there are factories, as they are the means by which the planters try to secure a renewal of the lease of indigo-growing land, and many temporary leases have been renewed without a break for the last 50 years. Rent-free tenures account for 2·6 per cent. of the area, and include religious tenures, such as *birit*, *brahmottar*, *shiottar* and *bishunprit* or grants to Brāhmans; *bhātottar* or grants to village bards (*Bhāts*); *fakīrānā* or grants to Muhammadan *fakīrs*, and other grants of a religious nature; service tenures, such as *jāgīrs*; *mālikānā* tenures; and maintenance tenures, such as *nankars* and *madad-māsh*.

Ryoti interests.

Ryoti interests have already been dealt with in the account of the various landed interests and in Chapter VII, and it will suffice therefore to mention that cases for settlement of fair rents were instituted before the Settlement Officer in respect of only 3·23 per cent. of the holdings of tenants, and rents were actually increased for only 1·3 per cent. of the holdings. Nearly the whole of the enhancement made during the settlement was due to the assessment of excess area to rent, and there was practically no enhancement of rent rates throughout the proceedings. This feature of the proceedings was comparatively unimportant, the petty proprietors owning most of the land being accustomed to raise their rents without reference to the Courts and without regard to law.

RELATIONS OF LANDLORDS AND TENANTS.

With regard to the condition of the tenantry, the following remarks of the Settlement Officer may be quoted:—"The general impression is that the tenantry of Bihār are a downtrodden body of men, in complete subservience to their landlords who evict

and enhance their rents at pleasure. The impression, however, is only partially true. Like most things in India, it is largely a question of caste. I believe this impression to convey a correct idea of the condition of low-caste ryots, such as Dusādhs, Kurmis, etc., but cultivators of higher caste, like Bābhans, are usually quite prepared to fight their landlord if he attempt to oppress them." As an instance of the importance of caste in this respect, Mr. Stevenson-Moore points out that where rents of 18½ holdings belonging to higher castes are retained, those for 81½ holdings of lower castes are enhanced; and that whereas the enhancement of rent-rates of higher castes is minute, in the case of lower castes it is very heavy. He would accept it as a general truth that landlords in North Bihār are unusually powerful and their tenants unusually depressed, but cites instances in which the tenantry were truculent and combined to adopt an unreasonable and actually hostile attitude towards their landlords. But cases of this nature mainly occurred in the north of the district, and were few in number compared with those in which other conditions prevailed.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES AND STAFF.

THE administration of the district is in charge of the Collector under the Commissioner of the Patna Division; and for general administrative purposes it is divided into three subdivisions with head-quarters at Muzaffarpur, Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi. The head-quarters subdivision is under the direct supervision of the Collector, while each of the other two subdivisions is in charge of a Subdivisional Officer exercising the powers of a Deputy Collector in revenue matters. At Muzaffarpur the Collector is assisted by a staff of Deputy Collectors consisting generally of five officers. In addition to this staff, there are two officers engaged on special branches of work, viz., a Special Deputy Collector in charge of Excise and Income-tax, and a Deputy Collector employed on partition work. An Assistant Magistrate and one or two Sub-Deputy Collectors are also generally posted to the head-quarters station, and in the cold weather a Joint-Magistrate is deputed there. The Subdivisional Officers of Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi are also usually assisted by a Sub-Deputy Collector.

REVENUE.

The revenue of the district under the five main heads—land revenue, cesses, excise, stamps and income-tax—was Rs. 17,59,454 in 1880-81 (when the income-tax had not been imposed), Rs. 16,94,216 in 1890-91 and Rs. 21,90,914 in 1900-01. In 1904-05 it amounted to Rs. 23,24,705, of which Rs. 9,85,175 were derived from land revenue, the other main heads of income being stamps Rs. 5,18,558, cesses Rs. 3,84,436, excise Rs. 3,77,733 and income-tax Rs. 58,803.

Stamps.

The revenue from stamps ranks next in importance as a source of income to that derived from land revenue. During the ten years ending in 1904-05 it rose from Rs. 4,55,425 to Rs. 5,18,558, the increase being mainly due to the growing demand for judicial stamps, which brought in Rs. 4,03,131 as compared with Rs. 3,52,468 in 1894-95. In other words, they accounted for nearly five-sixths of the total increase of revenue. The rise in their sale has been caused by the general growth of civil litigation which has occurred since the completion of the survey and settlement operations. The sale of court-fee stamps, which in 1904-05

realized Rs. 3,67,761, is by far the most important item in the receipts from judicial stamps; while impressed stamps accounted for Rs. 1,00,334, or nearly the whole of the receipts from the non-judicial stamps. The sale of the latter has not increased during the decade, and the total receipts during the quinquennium 1900-01 to 1904-05 were slightly less than in the preceding five years. This small decrease is probably due to the fact that land was not so much in demand as in the previous quinquennium, when famine prevailed and drove many of the poorer classes to the money-lender. The last quinquennium also shows a slight falling off in the receipts from court-fee stamps, but this is due to the fact that the figures for the previous quinquennium were inflated by the entry of Rs. 95,000 paid for a single case, instituted by the Mahārājā of Darbhangā for the probate of his brother's will.

Cesses. The road and public works cesses are, as usual, levied at the maximum rate of one anna in the rupee, and the current demand in 1904-05 was Rs. 3,86,416, the greater part (Rs. 3,66,338) of which was payable by 27,262 revenue-paying estates, while the remainder was due from 867 revenue-free estates and 106 rent-free lands. The number of tenures assessed to cesses was 10,360, while the number of recorded shareholders of estates and tenures was 106,404 and 9,381 respectively. A revaluation of the entire district was completed in 1905, the result being a decrease of Rs. 2,20,000 in the valuation and of Rs. 13,800 in the cess demand. This result was due to the preparation of a record of rights, for at previous valuations the landlords had filed returns showing rents higher than those which were legally payable.

Excise. The excise revenue is derived from imported liquors, country spirits, *tāri*, opium, and the duty and license fees on hemp drugs. A statement of the various exciseable articles and of the sums realized from them in the decade 1893—1902 is given in the Statistical Appendix, from which it will be apparent that the income from this source was fairly constant until the famine year 1896-97, after which it steadily decreased for three years. Since 1900-01 there has been a steady increase every year; in 1904-05 the revenue amounted to Rs. 3,77,733, the increase during the quinquennium being no less than 33 per cent.; and the settlements for 1905-06 brought in an increase of Rs. 36,676 from fees alone. The increase during this period has been greater than in any other district in the Patna Division, the average annual incidence of the excise revenue rising from anna 1-6 to anna 1-11 per head of the population; but in spite of this, the incidence is less than in any other Bihār district except Darbhangā.

Drinking in Bengal is largely indulged in by Hindī-speaking races, aborigines and mixed tribes, and consumption also varies inversely with the proportion of Muhammadans in the district. Muzaffarpur is a Hindī-speaking district, but the number of Muhammadans and men of aboriginal descent is small; and the result is that the people, as a whole, are not hard drinkers. The greater portion of the excise revenue is derived from the receipts from the sale of the country spirit prepared by distillation from molasses or the flower of the *mahuā* tree (*Bassia latifolia*), and from the sale of the fermented palm juice called *tāri*. These receipts amounted in 1904-05 to Rs. 2,95,352 – a figure representing an expenditure of only Rs. 1,077 for every 10,000 of the population, as compared with the Divisional average of Rs. 1,778. The manufacture and sale of country spirit are carried on under what is known as the dual system, *i.e.*, there is a central distillery at Muzaffarpur and outstills for the supply of the rest of the district. The average consumption of outstill liquor is 16 and of distillery liquor 54 proof gallons per mille, the incidence of taxation per head of the population being 11 pies and annas 2-8 respectively. There are 14 shops for the sale of distillery liquor and 99 outstills selling outstill liquor, *i. e.*, one retail shop for the sale of country spirit to every 24,378 persons; and, besides these, there are 1,805 shops licensed to sell *tāri*, or one shop to every 1,526 persons.

The receipts from hemp drugs, which account for nearly the whole of the remaining excise revenue, are comparatively small. In 1904-05 they aggregated Rs. 73,822, of which Rs. 73,542 were obtained from the duty and license fees on *gānja*, *i.e.*, the dried flowering tops of the cultivated female hemp plant (*Cannabis indica* or *sativa*), which has become coated with resin in consequence of being unable to set seeds freely. Only Rs. 7,270 were derived from the consumption of opium, and Rs. 1,050 from the license fees on imported liquors. The latter have found no favour with the mass of the population, both because they are unable to afford such a luxury and because they prefer the country spirit and *tāri* which they have drunk for generations past.

Income-tax.

From the Statistical Appendix it will be observed that in 1901-02 the income-tax yielded altogether Rs. 57,585 paid by 2,358 assessees, of whom 1,740 paying Rs. 19,137 had incomes of Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000. At that time the minimum income assessable was Rs. 500, but this was raised in 1903 to Rs. 1,000 per annum, and the number of assessees consequently fell in 1903-04 to 1,008, the net collections being Rs. 55,342. In

1904-05 the amount collected increased to Rs. 59,476 paid by 1,030 assessees. The realizations are chiefly on account of grain and money-lending, the renting of houses and trade; and the incidence of the tax per head of the population is only 4 pies.

Registration.

There are 12 offices for the registration of assurances under Act III of 1877. At Muzaffarpur the Special Sub-Registrar deals, as usual, with the documents presented there, and assists the District Magistrate, who is *ex-officio* Registrar, in supervising the proceedings of the Rural Sub-Registrars who are in charge of the other registration offices. The marginal statement shows the number of documents registered and the receipts and expenditure at each office in 1905.

NAME.	Documents registered.	Receipts.	Expenditure.
		Rs.	Rs.
Muzaffarpur ...	6,253	13,837	5,664
Belsand	3,550	3,263	1,740
Hājīpur	1,853	2,029	1,165
Katrā	2,889	2,560	1,591
Lālganj	1,784	1,989	1,237
Mahuwā	2,303	2,515	1,395
Mehnār	2,528	2,439	1,181
Parihar	3,491	2,414	1,700
Pāro	1,619	1,895	1,177
Puprī	3,932	3,082	1,829
Sheohar	4,185	3,927	1,925
Sītāmarhi ..	5,501	4,794	2,050
Total ...	40,188	44,744	22,654

The average number of documents registered annually during the quinquennium ending in 1904 was 35,606, as against 39,247 in the preceding five years, the decrease amounting to 9·2 per cent. The cause of this decrease is partly that the years of famine and distress in the previous quinquennium led to the registration of an exceptionally large number of documents, and partly that in the earlier stages of the settlement operations the zamīndārs in many cases took *kabuliyats* from their ryots to secure proof of the rents payable by them.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

Civil Justice.

The judicial staff entertained for the administration of civil justice consists of the District Judge, 3 Sub-Judges and 4 Munsifs. All these officers are stationed at Muzaffarpur, except two Munsifs who hold their Courts at Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi. Statistics of the civil work will be found in the Statistical Appendix, and it will be sufficient to state that of late years there has been a great increase in the number of suits under the rent laws. The reasons for the increased litigation about title are that the settlement operations brought disputes to a head, and made it necessary for the person who lost his case before the Revenue Officer to apply to the Civil Court or forfeit his claim permanently. The reasons for the increase in rent suits are that the record of rights, which has now been prepared, affords facilities to landlords for the recovery of their rents through the Courts.

and that their possession of a title-deed in the record of rights has strengthened the position of the tenants and enabled them to withstand the illegal coercion which was formerly practised by the landlords without difficulty. Thus the zamīndārs now have a record of rights on which they can safely rely in order to prove the relationship of landlords and tenants, whereas previously they were deterred from litigation by the fear that the papers filed by them would not be accepted by the Courts; and on the other hand, the tenants, relying on the same record, will not pay rents for which there is no legal liability, and therefore compel the landlords to resort to the Courts to prove their claims.

Criminal Justice.

Criminal justice is administered by the District and Sessions Judge, the District Magistrate and the various Deputy and Sub-Deputy Magistrates at the head-quarters and subdivisional stations. The district of Champāran is also included within the limits of the Muzaffarpur Sessions Division and of the jurisdiction oft he Court of the District Judge; but the Court of Sessions for cases committed from Champāran is held at Motīhāri, the head-quarters of that district. The sanctioned staff at Muzaffarpur consists, in addition to the District Magistrate, of 4 Deputy Magistrates of the first class and one Deputy Magistrate of the second or third class. Besides these officers, an Assistant Magistrate and one or two Sub-Deputy Magistrates exercising second or third class powers are generally posted there. The Subdivisional Officers at Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi are almost invariably officers vested with first class powers, and they are usually assisted by Sub-Deputy Magistrates of the second class. There are also Benches of Honorary Magistrates at Muzaffarpur (15 members) and at Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi (6 members each), all of which exercise second class powers. In all, there are 27 Honorary Magistrates, of whom eight are authorized to sit singly.

Statistics showing the work of the Criminal Courts will be found in the Statistical Appendix. During the last five years there has been a slight decrease in the number of cases disposed of, which is attributed to the survey and settlement proceedings, which have put into the hands of the ryots a record defining the position and legal status of their holdings, and have thereby diminished the number of disputes about land. A significant feature of the wholesome reform effected in this way is that cases of rioting have diminished by over 32 per cent. during the last quinquennium.

Crime.

An account has been given in Chapter II of the lawless state of the country when it first passed under British rule. It was overrun by predatory hordes of banditti, and was infested by

bands of robbers. This state of affairs has long since ceased, such dacoities are a thing of the past, while robberies are very rare, those which do occur being generally of a technical kind. The people are peaceful and law-abiding as a rule, and serious offences and crimes of violence are the exception. As in other parts of Bihār, thefts and burglaries are the commonest forms of crime. The latter are in many cases committed by Maghaiyā Doms coming from the adjacent districts of Sāran and Champāran; but both burglaries and thefts are committed by the local bad characters found in every part of the district. The soft mud walls of the houses, the weary sleep of the inmates, the negligence, and often the acquiescence, of the village *chaukīdār* combine with the adroitness of the burglar to render his task an easy one and his identification a comparatively rare occurrence. Further, the property stolen generally consists of brass utensils, trumpery ornaments, clothing, grain or cash; and when the same pattern prevails over the whole of the district, the identification of the property is as difficult as the concealment of it is easy.

POLICE. For police purposes the district is divided into 10 thānas or police circles, viz., Katrā, Muzaffarpur and Pāro in the head-quarters subdivision; Hājīpur, Lālganj and Mahuwā in the Hājīpur subdivision; and Belsand, Puprī, Sheohar and Sītāmarhi in the Sītāmarhi subdivision. Besides these, there are 12 independent outposts, and there are thus 22 centres for the investigation of crime. The force engaged in the prevention and detection of crime consisted in 1905 of the District Superintendent of Polic[e], 3 Inspectors, 31 Sub-Inspectors, 53 Head-constables and 441 constables. The cost of this force was Rs. 1,16,814, and there was one policeman to every $5\frac{1}{2}$ square miles and to every 5,207 persons, as compared with the average of 4·8 square miles and 3,194 persons for the whole of the Patna Division. The rural force for the watch and ward of villages in the interior consists of 4,817 *chaukīdārs*. The district contains 239 *chaukīd*[ārs] and 74 in the
95 in the head-quarters, 70 in the Hājīpur [...]ation on account of
Sītāmarhi subdivision; the incidence of tax[...]head of the population.
the village police being 1 anna 3 pies per area of 12 square miles, a
On the average, each union [...] a force of 20 *chaukīdārs*. Two special
population of 11,000, and [...] this district are that there is only one
features of the system in [...]*ārs*, and that in about one-fourth of the
dafadār to 20 *chau*[...]ecting members of the *panchāyats* are European
unions the co[...] managers or assistants to the managers of indigo con-
gentlemen; [...]cerns; the latter, as a rule, leave the assessment and collection of
the tax to their employés, and interfere personally only when

complaints are made by the villagers. The effect of the first of these two features is to give the *dafadārs* much more work and also much more influence than in districts in which there is a *dafadār* to each 10 *chaukīdārs;* while the effect of the latter is to strengthen the whole system of village government.

JAILS.

There is a District Jail at Muzaffarpur and a subsidiary jail at each of the outlying subdivisional head-quarters. The subsidiary jail at Sītāmarhi is reported to be unsuited for the detention of under-trial or convicted prisoners, and Government has condemned it and agreed to the construction of a new subsidiary jail. For a short time this jail was affiliated to the Darbhangā District Jail, and the Samāstipur subsidiary jail to the Muzaffarpur District Jail, but the arrangement did not work well and was given up some years ago. The jail at Muzaffarpur has accommodation for 437 prisoners, distributed as follows:—barracks without separate sleeping accommodation are provided for 290 male convicts, 46 female convicts, 16 juvenile convicts, 26 under-trial prisoners, 11 civil prisoners and 13 Europeans; the hospital holds 27 prisoners; and there are cells for 8 prisoners. The subsidiary jail at Sītāmarhi has accommodation for 22 males and 4 females, and that at Hājīpur for 5 under-trial prisoners, 4 male convicts and one female convict. The total daily average number of prisoners confined in the District Jail in 1905 was 320, of whom 289 were males and 31 females; it was 7 at Hājīpur and 19 at Sītāmarhi. The industries carried on at the District Jail are the manufacture of mustard oil, castor oil, carpets, matting, aloe fibre, coarse cloth and dusters.

CHAPTER XIII.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

OUTSIDE municipal areas, the administration of local affairs is vested in the District Board and in the Local Boards which have been constituted for the subdivisions of Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi. The District Board is responsible for the maintenance of roads, bridges and road-side rest-houses, and has the general superintendence of primary and middle class schools. It is also entrusted with the management of pounds and public ferries, the control over dispensaries, the provision of a proper water-supply and village sanitation. To the Local Boards, which work in subordination to it, have been delegated the management of pounds and the administration of the sums allotted for the construction and repair of village roads.

THE DISTRICT BOARD. The District Board consists of 19 members, of whom 6 are elected, 8 are nominated and 5 are *ex-officio* members. The Statistical Appendix shows, for the ten years 1892-93 to 1901-02, the principal sources from which it derives its income, and the objects on which it is spent; and it will suffice here to say that its average annual income during the decade was Rs. 2,76,000, of which Rs. 1,92,000 were derived from Provincial rates, while the average expenditure was Rs. 2,73,000, of which Rs. 1,96,000 were spent on civil works, Rs. 25,000 on education and Rs. 6,000 on medical relief. During the quinquennium 1895-96 to 1899-1900 the average annual income was Rs. 2,75,360 and the expenditure Rs. 2,79,070, and in the next five ye[illegible] total increase [illegible] they were
Rs. 2,97,160 and Rs. 2,93,730 respectively. The[illegible] was Rs. 1,09,000
income in the quinquennium 19[illegible] 19[illegible]-05 the Board had an
and of expenditure Rs. 73,3[illegible]80; its total income from all sources
opening balance of Rs. 68[illegible]na 7 pies per head of the population;
was Rs. 2,71,300, or 1 [illegible]e same year was Rs. 2,85,700.
and the expendit[illegible]ere, the Provincial rates form the principal
[illegible]e, bringing in Rs. 1,80,200; but the incidence of
[illegible]ation is very light, amounting to only 1 anna per head of the
population—a figure lower than in any other district of the Patna
Division except Sāran and Champāran.

By far the largest portion of the income of the District Board is spent on civil works, *i.e.*, the extension and maintenance of communications, the upkeep of staging bungalows, the construction of buildings and the provision of a proper water-supply. Altogether Rs. 1,97,500 were expended on these works in 1904-05, of which over four-fifths was spent on the construction, improvement and repairs of roads. The immediate administration of the roads is vested in the District Engineer, and that officer is also responsible for the management and repair of the *dāk* bungalow at Muzaffarpur and of 4 inspection bungalows and of 8 *dāk* sheds. The Board also controls 47 ferries and 179 pounds, which are generally leased out to the highest bidder. The area of each pound has been fixed at 4 square miles, and a large number are settled with indigo-planters. The number of pounds is greater than in any other district of the Division, and they are settled at an average rent of less than Rs. 30. The receipts from this source have decreased from Rs. 6,767 in 1899-1900 to Rs. 6,457 in 1904-05. The revenue from ferries, on the other hand, has risen from Rs. 31,605 to Rs. 37,120.

After civil works, education constitutes the heaviest charge on the resources of the District Board, entailing an expenditure of Rs. 53,000, or nearly one-fifth of its total expenditure, in 1904-05. It employs an inspecting staff of 5 Sub-Inspectors of schools and 17 Inspecting Pandits, and maintains 4 Middle schools and aids four others, besides aiding 34 Upper Primary and 800 Lower Primary schools. Besides this, it awards scholarships tenable at the Bihār School of Engineering and pays the stipend of a student at the Bengal Veterinary College at Belgāchia.

For the relief of sickness it maintains one dispensary at Runi Saiyadpur and aids three others. During the five years 1898-99 to 1902-03, 5·62 per cent. of the available income, *i.e.*, the income from other sources than road-cess, was spent on dispensaries; only 2·8 per cent. of its ordinary income was spent on medical relief and sanitation in 1904-05—a proportion lower than in any other Bihār district. It also maintains two Veterinary dispensaries at Muzaffarpur and Sītāmarhi, and, when necessary, deputes itinerant Veterinary Assistants to cope with outbreaks of epidemic diseases among cattle in the interior.

It is reported that the District Board works satisfactorily and without friction, and administers the funds placed at its disposal with care and efficiency. The members, as a general rule, take great interest in the working of the Board, and their advice in regard to local requirements and their co-operation in connection with road repairs are always at the disposal of the Chairman.

LOCAL BOARDS.

The Local Boards of Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi have jurisdiction corresponding, in each case, with that of the subdivisional charge of the same name. They consist of 9 members each, of whom 7 are nominated by Government and 2 are *ex-officio* members, the system of election which obtains in many of the districts in Bengal not having been introduced. The powers of the two Local Boards are very limited, the management of village roads and pounds alone being entrusted to them, but this work they do satisfactorily.

MUNICIPALITIES.

There are four municipalities in the district, viz., Muzaffarpur, Hājīpur, Lālganj and Sītāmarhi. The total number of rate-payers is 14,654, out of a total urban population of 88,055, the ratio being 16·64 per cent. as compared with the Divisional average of 17·7 per cent. The incidence of taxation varies from 7½ annas in Hājīpur to Re. 1-5-11 per head in Muzaffarpur, which is the most heavily taxed municipality in the Division. Statistics of the receipts and expenditure in each municipality during the years 1892-93 to 1901-02 will be found in the Statistical Appendix. The maintenance of roads, the improvement of drainage and the provision of adequate conservancy arrangements are the chief demands on the municipal income.

All the four municipalities are presided over by official Chairmen, and the relations between them and the executive are generally satisfactory. It is reported, however, that the Commissioners are apathetic, and with a few exceptions are content to leave the work in the hands of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

Muzaffarpur.

The Muzaffarpur Municipality was established in 1864, and is administered by a municipal board consisting of 19 Commissioners, of whom 12 are elected, 6 are nominated and one is an *ex-officio* member. The area within municipal limits is 6 square miles, divided into 6 wards, and the number of rate-payers is 7,239, or 15·8 per cent. of the population. The average income during the five years 1895-96 to 1899-1900 was Rs. 67,020 and the expenditure Rs. 58,390; and in the next quinquennium they were Rs. 80,240 and Rs. 69,590 respectively. The total increase of income in the quinquennium 1900-01 to 1904-05 was Rs. 66,100, and of expenditure Rs. 56,000. During this period the municipality has shown considerable enterprise in constructing a new market in the centre of the town and a septic tank, which has recently been opened. In 1904-05 the income of the municipality was Rs. 86,950, the main sources of income being the rate on holdings at 7½ per cent. of their annual value, which yielded Rs. 30,000, a latrine-tax assessed at 5 per cent. of the annual

value of the holdings, which brought in Rs. 16,000, and tolls on roads and ferries (Rs. 12,900). The incidence of taxation was Re. 1-5-11 per head. The expenditure amounted to Rs. 73,180, the principal items being conservancy and public works, which accounted for 38·8 and 25·4 per cent. respectively of the expenditure. Besides this, the municipality paid the interest and instalments of a loan of Rs. 70,000 granted by Government some years previously.

Hājīpur was constituted a municipality in 1869, and has a municipal board consisting of 13 members, of whom 9 are elected and 4 are nominated. The area within municipal limits is 10 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 3,721, or 17·3 per cent. of the total population. The average income during the five years 1895-96 to 1899-1900 was Rs. 10,350 and the expenditure Rs. 9,110; and in the next quinquennium they were Rs. 14,190 and Rs. 11,450 respectively. The total increase of income in the quinquennium 1900-01 to 1904-05 was Rs. 19,170, and of expenditure Rs. 11,690. In 1904-05 the income of the municipality was Rs. 14,506, the principal receipts being Rs. 9,090 realized from a tax on houses and lands at 7½ per cent. of the annual value of the holdings; the total incidence of taxation was 7½ annas per head of the population. The expenditure amounted to Rs. 11,290, the principal items being public works, which accounted for 32·5 per cent. of the expenditure, general establishment (17·5 per cent.), conservancy (17·3 per cent.) and medical relief (16·4 per cent.). Hājīpur.

Lālganj was constituted a municipality in 1869, and has a municipal board consisting of 11 Commissioners, of whom 10 are nominated and one is elected. The area within municipal limits is 10 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 2,022, or 17·5 per cent. of the population. The average income during the five years 1895-96 to 1899-1900 was Rs. 5,950 and the expenditure Rs. 5,150; and in the next quinquennium they were Rs. 6,630 and Rs. 5,720 respectively. The total increase of income in the quinquennium 1900-01 to 1904-05 was Rs. 3,365, and of expenditure Rs. 2,860. In 1904-05 the income of the municipality was Rs. 7,100, of which Rs. 5,120 were realized from a rate on holdings at 7½ per cent. of their annual value; the incidence of taxation was annas 7-11 per head of the population. The expenditure amounted to Rs. 6,010, of which 30·9 per cent. was spent on public works, 21·2 per cent. on conservancy and 18·3 per cent. on general establishment. Lālganj.

Sītāmarhi was constituted a municipality in 1882, and has a municipal board consisting of 12 Commissioners, of whom one is Sītāmarhi.

an *ex-officio* member, the rest being nominated. The area within municipal limits is 5 square miles, and the number of rate-payers is 1,672, or 17·5 per cent. of the population. The average income during the five years 1895-96 to 1899-1900 was Rs. 10,860, and the expenditure Rs. 8,570; and in the next five years they were Rs. 12,430 and Rs. 9,670 respectively. The total increase of income in the quinquennium 1900-01 to 1904-05 was Rs. 7,875 and Rs. 5,530 respectively. In 1904-05 the income of the municipality was Rs. 16,315, of which Rs. 6,210 were derived from a tax on persons assessed according to their circumstances and property; the incidence of taxation was annas 12-10 per head of the population. The expenditure was Rs. 11,950, of which 40·9 per cent. was spent on public works, 13·87 per cent. on medical relief, and 13·53 per cent. on conservancy. It is reported that, owing to the energy of the Subdivisional Officer, who is Chairman of the Municipal Board, considerable improvements have been effected in the roads and drainage, and steps are being taken to provide the municipality with a suitable market in a central site.

CHAPTER XIV.

EDUCATION.

PROGRESS OF EDUCATION.

THE advance of education among the people has been very rapid since the formation of the district in 1875. In that year there were 314 schools of all classes attended by 7,027 pupils; in 1885 the number of schools had risen to 1,787 and the attendance to 20,726; and in 1895 the schools numbered 1,796, and the pupils 28,167. In the next decade, however, there was a falling off in the number of schools, and in the year 1905 they declined to 1,463; but the number of pupils under instruction rose to 38,248—a fact which indicates a remarkable rate of progress and clearly shows that the decrease in the schools was due simply to the fact that a number of small and inefficient institutions disappeared under the pressure of competition. The percentage of boys under instruction to those of school-going age is now 18·2; there are 14 children at school to every 1,000 of the population, and there is one school to every 2 square miles and to every 2·8 villages. The supervision of these schools is entrusted to an inspecting staff consisting of a Deputy Inspector of Schools, 5 Sub-Inspectors of Schools and 18 Guru Instructors.

MUHAMMADAN EDUCATION.

It is satisfactory to observe that, in spite of the fact that secular instruction is not very popular among the Muhammadan community in Bengal and that they are generally slower than [illegible] Hindus to grasp the advantages of education, the Muham[illegible]ns of Muzaffarpur contribute their fair share of the students at[illegible]ding the various schools. In the year 1885 the number of Muhammadans under instruction in all classes of schools was 2,371, and their percentage to the total number of scholars was 11·4; in 1894-95 the aggregate was 4,757 with a percentage of 16·8; and in 1904-05 it rose to 4,838, but the percentage fell to 12·6. It appears therefore that, though there has been a great educational awakening among the Muhammadans, the rate of progress has in recent years not been as rapid as among the Hindus. The ratio of Musalmān boys under instruction is still,

The account of Education in Muzaffarpur has been contributed by Mr. W. Billing, Inspector of Schools, Patna Division.

however, higher than the proportion of Muhammadans to the total population (12·26 per cent.).

COLLEGIATE EDUCATION.

The only college in the district is the Bhumihār Brāhman College at Muzaffarpur. This college was established as the late Nawāb Imdād Alī Khān's Society High School, with a trust fund of Rs. 50,000 contributed by the Bhumihār Brāhman Sabhā; it was affiliated to the Calcutta University as a second-grade college in 1899; and it was raised to the status of a first-grade college in 1900. The institution is maintained at a monthly cost of Rs. 814, of which Rs. 306 are derived from fees, the remainder being contributed by Bābu Langat Singh. In the year 1899 there were 69 students on the rolls, and the number has now risen to 105.

SECONDARY EDUCATION. High English Schools.

For twenty years after the formation of the district, Muzaffarpur contained only one High School, but the number rose to four in 1895 and to five in 1905. Three of these are situated at Muzaffarpur, viz., the *Zilā* School with 264 students, the Bhumihār Brāhman Collegiate School (326 pupils), and the Mukerjea's Seminary (342 pupils); the other two schools are at the outlying subdivisional head-quarters, Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi, and have an attendance of 129 and 218 respectively. The average cost of educating each pupil is Rs. 11-1-9 and Rs. 13-4-10 respectively in the Bhumihār Brāhman Collegiate School and the Mukerjea's Seminary, which are both private institutions; it is Rs. 31-15-7 in the Zilā School, a Government institution; while in the Hājīpur and Sītāmarhi Schools, which are aided by Government, the cost is Rs. 24-11-6 and Rs. 22-7-4 respectively.

Middle English Schools.

The second class of secondary schools consists of the Middle English Schools, *i.e.*, schools teaching up to the Middle Scholarship examination, in which English forms part of the recognized course of studies. The number of these schools rose from 6 in 1880 to 8 in 1885, declined to 7 in 1895, and remained at that number in 1905; while the attendance increased from 408 in 1880 to 607 in 1885, declined to 478 in 1895 and to 353 in 1905. Two of these institutions are in the town of Muzaffarpur, viz., the Methodist Mission Girls' School, which is aided by Government, and the Dharma Samāj School, which is aided by the Municipality. Of the remaining five schools, four, aided by the District Board, are situated in the interior of the district; and one in the head-quarters station is unaided.

Middle Vernacular Schools.

The number of Middle Vernacular Schools, *i.e.*, schools which teach up to the Middle Scholarship, but in which the vernacular is the only recognized course of studies, was 13 in 1880. It fell

to 8 in 1885, and remained unaltered in 1895, but again declined to 7 in 1905. All these schools are situated in the interior of the district. One, at Lālganj, is managed by Government, four are under the direct management of the District Board, and two are maintained by the Darbhangā Rāj. The attendance in schools of this class has been steadily declining since 1880, when it was 769, falling to 594 in 1885, to 510 in 1895, and to 352 in 1905. The decrease in the attendance, accompanied as it is by a corresponding rise in the attendance in High Schools, which increased from 283 in 1880 to 1,279 in 1905, points to a growing preference for higher education among the class for which Middle English schools are intended—a preference due presumably to a rise in the standard of living and to the higher market value of an English education. There are 8 Middle scholarships allotted to the district, of which 2 are reserved for Muhammadans.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

In 1880 there were 2,432 primary schools, which declined to 1,765 in 1885 and to 898 in 1895, but rose to 1,033 in 1905. The decrease in the number of schools in 1885 was due to the introduction in that year of the rule that *pāthshālas* having only five boys or only such boys as were related to the teachers were to be excluded from the returns. Between the years 1885 and 1895 a similar rule that schools with less than 10 pupils should receive no aid from public funds again caused a serious falling off in the number of primary schools. The increase between the years 1895 and 1905 was due to the abolition of the system of payment by results and the revival of the stipendiary system under which the teacher of a primary school receives a fixed monthly stipend, in addition to allowances, paid towards the close of the financial year, according to the general condition of the school, the qualifications of the teachers and the circumstances of the locality. Though there was a continual decline in the number of primary schools from the year 1880 to 1895, there was on the other hand a continued progress in the attendance, which rose from 18,682 in 1880 to 19,209 in 1885, to 19,745 in 1895, and to 31,890 in 1905. It is noteworthy that during the last decade the number of pupils receiving instruction in primary schools has nearly doubled—a result due mainly to these schools having become more attractive of late years in consequence of the introduction of the Kindergarten system of teaching. Of 31,890 pupils studying in primary schools on the 31st March 1905, 28,968 were Hindus, 2,903 were Muhammadans, and 19 were native Christians. The cost of educating each pupil was Re. 1-3-9 from public funds and Rs. 2-6-0 from all sources. There are 6 Upper Primary and 34 Lower Primary scholarships for boys.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS.

Prior to 1895 there was no special school in the district, but in that year three such schools, with 134 pupils, were returned for the first time; and the number rose to 14 with 282 pupils in 1905. Of these, three are Guru-training schools (one in each of the subdivisions), which have recently been opened for the training of *gurus* for primary schools; the remaining institutions are recognized Sanskrit *tols*, which prepare candidates for the First and Second Sanskrit examinations of the Bihār Sanskrit Sanjiban. The most important of these is the Dharma Samāj School in Muzaffarpur, which also prepares candidates for the Title examination. It has five Pandits on its staff, and receives a grant-in-aid from Government, the remainder of the cost being met from subscriptions. All the students of this school receive their education free of cost, and most of them are Brāhmans.

FEMALE EDUCATION.

There was no girls' school in the district prior to 1885; but in 1880, 49 girls, and in 1885, 183 girls attended boys' schools. Between 1885 and 1895, 12 girls' schools were opened, and the number of girls attending them was 205. Besides these, there were 485 girls receiving instruction in boys' schools, so that the total number of girls under instruction in 1895 was 690. In the decade ending with the 31st March 1905, there were 33 schools for girls in the district with 672 girls on the rolls. The most important of these is the Methodist Mission Girls' School in the town of Muzaffarpur, which is attended solely by native Christian girls; it receives a grant-in-aid of Rs. 77 a month from Government. In addition to the girls in female schools, there are 1,532 girls in boys' schools (1,488 in public and 44 in private institutions); and the total number of girls under instruction is thus 2,204, nearly all of whom read in Lower Primary schools.

There is no prejudice against girls being taught by a male teacher, provided that he is a resident of the same village: nor is there any objection to boys and girls of tender years reading together. Until recently, only the Mission Girls' School had female teachers on its staff, the teachers of all other girls' schools being males; but a *pāthshāla* for native girls, called the Chapman Pāthshāla after the District Judge, has recently been opened in Muzaffarpur town with a female teacher. This school has about 50 girls on its rolls, the majority of whom are Bengalis, and is at present supported solely by subscriptions and donations. Its aim is to teach the Upper Primary course, and it is intended to raise it gradually to the Middle standard. For the house-to-house teaching of respectable females, two lady teachers have been sanctioned for the town of Muzaffarpur: one for the Hindu and the other for the Muhammadan community. There are two

model girls' schools in the district—one at Gangaya in the head-quarters subdivision and the other at Sursand in the Sītāmarhi subdivision ; the one had 39 and the other 31 pupils on the rolls in 1905. There are two Lower Primary scholarships created by the District Board specially for girls, in addition to the Government scholarships referred to above.

The expansion of female education of late years has been very remarkable, and is due to the introduction of a system of administration suited to the social customs and requirements of the country as well as to a greater outlay of public funds.

HOSTELS AND BOARDING-HOUSES.

There are three hostels in the town of Muzaffarpur—one in connection with the Mission Girls' Middle English School, another belonging to the Mission Boys' Upper Primary School, and a third attached to the Dharma Samāj Sanskrit School, having 34, 19, and 15 inmates respectively. The first two are under missionary management, and are properly supervised. In addition to these, there are two boarding-houses in the mofussil—one attached to the Jaintpur Middle English School, and the other to the Baghi Sanskrit *Tol*, with 17 and 15 inmates respectively. They are supported entirely by subscriptions paid by the leading men of the neighbourhood. It is under contemplation to establish boarding-houses in connection with the Zilā School and the Sītāmarhi High English School. In the interior, where almost all the boys live with their parents or recognized guardians, boarding-houses are not needed.

CHAPTER XV.

GAZETTEER.

Bairagniā.—A village in the Sītāmarhi subdivision situated on the Nepāl frontier on the east bank of the Lāl Bakyā river in 26° 44′ N. and 85° 20′ E. Population (1901) 2,405. Bairagniā, which is the terminus of a branch of the Tirhut State Railway, is a large grain and oil-seed depôt of growing importance, where the dealers of the plains meet the hillmen, and the Nepāl trade changes hands.

Bakhrā.—A village in the south-east corner of the head-quarters subdivision, situated 22 miles south-west of Muzaffarpur. Population (1901) 2,993. It contains a police outpost, saltpetre store, two schools and some temples, and is the residence of a family of influential land-holders said to be the descendants of the *Sadar* Kānungos of Bihār. The large indigo factory of Saraiyā is situated a short distance to the east on the banks of the Bayā river, across which the Chāpra road is carried on a fine bridge of 3 arches. In the adjoining village of Kolhuā is an interesting group of remains, consisting of a pillar crowned by a lion, a stūpa and ancient tank. The pillar now goes by the name of the Bakhrā pillar, probably because it was described as such in 1835 by Mr. Stephenson, who appears to have been one of the first to bring it to notice. For a description of these remains, see the article on Basārh.

Bariārpur.—A village in the head-quarters subdivision, situated on the Nūn, 14 miles south-east of Muzaffarpur. This is one of the largest villages in the district, its population being returned in 1901 at 9,121. It contains a large bazar at which markets are held thrice a week.

Basantpur.—A large village in the south-west of the head-quarters subdivision, close to the main road leading from Lālganj to Sāhibganj, and a short distance to the south of Pāro. Population (1901) 5,312. The Kewālpura outwork of the Saraiyā indigo factory is situated a little to the north of the village.

Basārh.—Village in the north-west corner of the Hājīpur subdivision, situated 20 miles north-west of Hājīpur in 25° 59′ N.

and 85° 8′ E. Population (1901) 3,527. Basārh has been identified with the ancient Vaisāli, the capital of the powerful confederacy of the Lichchhavis. It was thrice visited by Buddha; it was the scene of the second great Buddhist Council; and it long remained a stronghold of Buddhism. Vaisāli was equally sacred to the Jains as the birthplace of Buddha's contemporary and rival, Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. For a more detailed account of its history, see Chapter II.

Little is now left to recall its ancient greatness, the principal remains consisting of a huge mound known locally as the fort (*garh*) of Rājā Visāl: the close correspondence of the name of this eponymous local chieftain with the name of the city is obvious. The following description of the remains, as they existed in 1871, is slightly condensed from General Cunningham's account:—"The remains consist of a large deserted fort, and a ruined brick stūpa. The fort is a large brick-covered mound of earth, with round towers at the four corners; and the whole is surrounded by a ditch. The ruined ramparts along the edge, and four towers at the corners, are somewhat higher than the mass of the mound, which has a general elevation of from 6 to 8 feet above the country. The main entrance was in the middle of the south face, where there still exists a broad embankment across the ditch, as well as a passage through the rampart. In the northern face there was probably only a postern gate, as there is no passage through the rampart, and no trace of any embankment across the ditch, excepting the fact that the only dry part of the ditch is on this face. The only building within the fort is a small brick temple of modern date.

"Outside the south-west angle of the fort, and about 1,000 feet distant, there is a ruined mound of solid brickwork, 23 feet 8 inches in height above the fields. The whole of the top has been levelled for the reception of Musalmān tombs, of which the largest, ascribed to Mīr Abdāl, is said to be 500 years old. On the south edge of the mound there is a magnificent wide-spreading banyan tree, supported on numerous trunks, which shades the whole of the tombs. On the same side also a flight of steps leads down to the village of Basārh. This brick mound is the ruin of one of the stūpas or solid towers of Vaisāli, of which so many are described by Hiuen Tsiang. 'Both within and without and all round the town of Vaisāli,' says he, 'the sacred monuments are so many that it would be difficult to enumerate them'. It is much to be regretted that the presence of the Musalmān tombs on the top of this ancient stūpa effectually precludes any attempt at excavation. An annual fair is held at

the Basārh stūpa in the month of Chait, when many thousands of people assemble at the shrine of Mīr Abdāl. As the occurrence of this fair is regulated by the solar reckoning of the Hindus and not by the lunar year of the Muhammadans, I conclude that the festival was established long before the time of the Musalmān saint. I would, therefore, as the fair is held beside the ruined stūpa, connect the festival with some celebration in honour of Buddha, or of one of his disciples."

Nineteen years later General Cunningham found that the walls had entirely disappeared, but the ramparts and ditches still remained. The fort now forms an elevated piece of land, of oblong shape, almost one mile in circumference. The longest sides run from north to south, about 1,700 feet long, and the shorter ones from east to west, about 800 feet in length. It is surrounded by a ditch, 125 feet broad, where water still exists in some places, but the land is almost entirely under cultivation. The height of the plateau from the bottom of the ditch is 15 feet on the average. The surface of the fort is undulating, with a well-marked deep depression a little north of the centre, and with two smaller depressions running through the centre, from north to south and from east to west. To the south, an embankment still exists, evidently the remains of the high road leading to the fort. There are many holes in the surface made by the villagers digging for bricks or seeking treasure, but there are no surface indications of any structural remains. In the south-western corner stands a modern temple containing some curious brass images, and the ground round it has been fenced off and is cultivated by the priests. A modern temple west of the village, near the tank called the Bāwan Pokhar, contains some mediæval statues said to have been dug out of the tank. In the neighbourhood are several fine sheets of water and a large number of small tanks. Local tradition states that there were once 52 tanks, and that Basārh was the residence of the Purānic Bali Rājā. Vishnu appeared here in his fourth incarnation in the shape of a dwarf, and asked the Bali Rājā for as much ground as he could cover with his three feet. Two feet covered the heaven and earth, and the third he placed on the head of the Bali Rājā, and sent him to hell as a punishment for his overweening pride. The natives of the place say that the "*bāwan pokhar*" or 52 tanks mark the scene of this occurrence. General Cunningham however points out that the abundance of tanks is a common feature of Buddhist sites.

Excavations were carried out in the fort by Doctor Bloch, Archæological Surveyor, Bengal Circle, in 1904, and remains of

masonry buildings were found in every place explored. Some of them were just below the surface and did not go further than a few feet; these buildings cannot have been very old, and afford some evidence of the place having been inhabited only a few centuries ago. Others, which were found at a depth of about 5 feet, reaching generally as far as 9 or 10 feet down, probably represent the remains of the ruined buildings seen by Hiuen Tsiang in the 7th century A. D. There is evidence that they go back to at least 300 A. D., but they may have been still older. The foundations of the old buildings only have remained, and they show that as a rule the rooms and chambers were remarkably small. The floors were of concrete with a layer of bricks; the houses themselves were tiled; and the top of the roof must have been crowned by small pinnacles. All the buildings discovered were secular, and no remains of temples were found. Ashes and small fragments of burnt wood were found on all sides, and there is every probability that the place was sacked and plundered.

The most interesting discovery was a large quantity of inscribed seals, over 700 in number. Nearly all were discovered in a room which was in all probability used for the deposit of refuse, as they were found mixed up with broken pottery, bones, burnt rice, ashes and other rubbish. These seals were originally attached to letters or other literary documents, which must have decayed quickly in the damp soil. They belonged partly to officials, partly to private persons, generally bankers and merchants, many of whom belonged to mercantile guilds; and they were entirely secular with the exception of one bearing the mark of a linga with a *trisūl* on each side, which is clearly the seal of a temple. Probably this seal bears the oldest figure of a linga which has as yet been found in India. Like the rest of the seals, it dates back to the 4th or 5th century A. D. It is a matter of some local interest that the ancient name of Tirhut, Tīrabhukti, occurs on two of the seals.

At Kolhuā, 3 miles to the north-west of Basārh, there are more remains, all situated on a low mound one mile to the south-east of the village of Bakhrā. These consist of a stone pillar surmounted by a lion, a ruined stūpa of solid brick, an old tank, and some small eminences marking the site of ancient buildings. These remains clearly correspond with the account of the remains to the north-west of Vaisāli given by Hiuen Tsiang. "To the north-west," he says, "there was a stūpa built by Asoka, and a stone pillar, 50 or 60 feet in height, crowned by a lion. To the south of the pillar there was a tank, which had been dug for the use of Buddha, when he dwelt in this place. At a

short distance to the west of the tank there was a second stūpa, on the spot where the monkeys had offered honey to Buddha. At the north-west corner of the tank there was a statue of a monkey." At Kolhuā there is still the lion pillar crowned by a lion; north of it is the brick stūpa built by Asoka; and to the south is an ancient brick-faced tank, now called Rām-kund, which evidently is the monkey tank so famous in the history of Buddha. Traces of the minor stūpas, which Hiuen Tsiang mentions close to it, are still to be found in a number of broken bricks covering the ground south of the tank. The only difference between his account and the existing remains is in the height of the lion pillar, which is little more than 45 feet above water level, but the difference is due to the fact that it has sunk several feet in the sand.

The pillar consists of a monolith supporting a square pedestal, on which is a lion carved in stone; the shaft, which is a single block of polished sandstone, now stands about 22 feet high, and the remainder is below ground owing to the accumulation of rubbish round it. The statue on the top represents a lion, seated facing the north, with his mouth open as if snarling and his tongue slightly protruding. It appears to be undoubtedly one of the six great monolithic pillars erected by Asoka to mark the different stages of the journey to Nepāl which he undertook in the 21st year of his reign (249 B. C.), in order to visit some of the holy sites of Buddhism. It bears no inscription, but has been scribbled over by modern visitors; this vandalism is no new feature, as one such rudely chiselled scrawl was left in 1792 by Reuben Burrow, a distinguished mathematician and astronomer, and one of the earliest members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.

On the low mound close by, which marks the remains of the Asoka stūpa, some Buddhist statues of the Pāla period are enshrined within a modern brick temple, the best of which is a large image of Buddha seated, wearing a crown and necklace; this image was dug up in an adjoining field. To the west of the pillar are two earthen mounds, called Bhīm Sen's baskets, while the pillar itself is known locally as Bhīm Sen's *lāthī* or club. There are other mounds in the neighbourhood, and extensive remains representing the ruins of Vaisāli are scattered all over the country for several miles round. For further information, see Archæological Survey Reports, Vol. I, pp. 54—64, and Vol. XVI, pp. 6—16 and 89—93; and Reports of the Archæological Surveyor, Bengal Circle, for 1901-02 and 1903-04. Also Vaisāli by Vincent A. Smith, J. R. A. S., 1902.

Belā Muchhpakaunī.—A village and police outpost in the north-east of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, situated on the frontier about a mile to the west of the Murha, a tributary of the Dhaus river. The original name of the village is said to have been only Belā, and the epithet Muchhpakaunī was added on account of the bad quality of the water, as it is said that any one drinking it for some time will have his moustaches (*muchh*) turned grey. Khanwā, a little to the north, is a large trade depôt; and at Sarkhandi Bhita, 2 miles to the east of the Murha, a considerable trade in grain, cloth and salt is carried on with Nepāl. The latter is one of the largest villages in the district, having a population of 6,176.

Belsand.—A large village in the Sītāmarhi subdivision, situated on the east bank of the Old Bāghmati, about 27 miles north-west of Muzaffarpur, on the Muzaffarpur-Sītāmarhi road, and 13 miles from Sītāmarhi. Population (1901) 4,205. It contains a police station, primary vernacular school and indigo factory.

Charaut.—A village close to the eastern boundary of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, about 8 miles north-east of Puprī. With a population of 8,947 souls, it is one of the largest villages in the district. It contains a religious establishment subordinate to the *math* or monastery at Matihāni in Nepāl, the Mahanth of which is one of the richest land-owners in the district. The tradition relates that more than two centuries ago a Vaishnava, named Srī Rām Bālajī, went to Janakpur in Nepāl from Jaipur. When returning home, he was struck by the serene and silent grandeur of the forest where the village of Matihāni at present stands, and determined to spend the remainder of his days there in religious meditation. He found a holy tank from which King Janaka had taken earth for his sacrificial altars, and on its bank he erected a hut. The fame of his sanctity soon spread, and the rich and powerful flocked to do him service. The Rājā of Nepāl gave him four villages, a temple dedicated to Jānakījī (Sīta) was built soon after, and the Vaishnava assumed the title of Mahanth. The first few incumbents were given extensive grants of land by the Rājā of Nepāl, and the third, Jai Kishun, having received in 1761 a grant of the villages of Charaut and Madhurāpur in this district from the Mahārājā of Darbhangā, founded a *math* at the former place. The present Mahanth of Charaut has been deprived of his possessions in Nepāl. Being suspected of connivance at a murder, he incurred the Nepāl Darbār's displeasure, and was arrested, but escaped to British territory. The Darbār passed an order depriving him of his Mahanthship of Matihāni

and Charaut, and applied for his extradition. This, however, was not granted, and though his possessions in Nepāl have been lost, he still rules at Charaut.

Deokali.—A village in the Sītāmarhi subdivision situated on the Belsand-Sītāmarhi road, 4 miles east of Sheohar and 11 miles west of Sītāmarhi. The village contains a group of temples situated in a large court-yard standing at the top of a great mound; the latter is ascended by a long flight of steps leading from a fine lake stretching for ¼ mile below. This mound is called Draupadagarh, and local tradition affirms that it was the fort of Drupada, the father of Draupada, whose story is enshrined in the Mahābhārata. The principal temple, which contains a large black stone lingam, is called Bhubaneswar; and the people attribute a fabulous age to it. A fair is held here on the Sivarātri or last day of the waning moon of Phāgun (February-March). *See* also Records Arch. Surv. Ind. Vol. XVI, pp. 29-30.

Hājīpur subdivision.—Southern subdivision of the district, lying between 25° 29′ and 26° 1′ N., and 85° 4′ and 85° 39′ E., and extending over 798 square miles. The subdivision was formed in 1865, and is divided into three thānas—Hājīpur, Lālganj and Mahuwā. It contains 1,412 villages and two towns, Hājīpur, its head-quarters, situated at the confluence of the Gandak with the Ganges, and Lālganj on the Gandak. The population rose from 714,079 in 1891 to 718,181 in 1901; of these 654,185 are Hindus, 63,931 are Muhammadans, and 65 are Christians. The density of the population is 900 to the square mile; the average number of villages and houses per square mile is 1·77 and 176 respectively; and the average population of each village is 485.

The subdivision was long the centre of Muhammadan supremacy, and its Musalmān rulers have left many traces of their rule. "It is studded with villages and towns bearing Muhammadan names, showing how completely they had identified themselves with the places of their conquest. They not only lived in them, but reparcelled the lands, giving them their own national names; they not only built new cities, towns and villages, but re-named those in existence. About 65 per cent. of the villages in the Hajīpur subdivision bear names of Muhammadan origin."*

Hājīpur town.—Head-quarters town of the subdivision of the same name, situated on the eastern bank of the Gandak, a short distance above its confluence with the Ganges, opposite Patna, in 25 41′ N. and 85° 12′ E. The population rose from 22,306

* "On some names of places in Behar." Calcutta Review, January 1891.

in 1872 to 25,078 in 1881, but fell again to 21,487 in 1891 and to 21,398 in 1901; of these 17,611 were Hindus and 3,765 Muhammadans. It lies on the main line of the Tirhut State Railway, which runs west from Katihār, and is also connected by a direct branch with Muzaffarpur town; and its position on the railway and its command of water traffic in three directions make the town of considerable commercial importance.

Hājīpur was founded by Hājī Ilyās *alias* Shams-ud-dīn Ilyās, king of Bengal between 1345 and 1358 A. D., who strengthened the town with a large fort, of which the ramparts are still visible. It was long the head-quarters of the Bengal Governors of Bihār and was a place of great importance: indeed the town is said to have extended as far as Mehnār, 20 miles to the east, and to a village called Gadai-Sarai 4 miles to the north. It figured conspicuously in the history of the struggles between Akbar and his rebellious Afghān governors of Bengal, being besieged and captured by the imperial troops in 1572 and again in 1574; but after the transfer of the seat of government to Patna, it lost its former importance. In 1572 the Afghān rebels seized the town, but were driven out of it by Muzaffar Khān, one of Akbar's generals; and only two years afterwards, the news came that Dāūd Khān, the son of Sulaimān Kirānī, had assumed the title of king, and destroyed the fort at Patna. A *farmān* was sent from Delhi to Khān Khānān, ordering him to punish Dāūd, and to subdue Bihār; and a number of chieftains, who had remained loyal to the Mughals, were ordered to assist him. Meanwhile, Dāūd had taken refuge in the fort of Hājīpur, to which the imperial forces laid siege. On hearing this, Akbar himself set out for Patna; and on his arrival, determined to reduce Hājīpur. Awed by the presence of the imperial army, Dāūd sued for peace, when Akbar, unwilling to gain a cheap victory over one who had aspired to independence, is said to have magnanimously sent an offer to accept one of the three following means of deciding to whose dominions Bihār should be annexed. He invited Dāūd to put the matter to the test by a single combat, or to depute a wrestler who should meet an imperial wrestler, or to send a fighting elephant which should cope with an imperial animal: whichever alternative he chose, victory should be declared to belong to the side whose combatant won. The story goes on to say that while this parleying was going on owing to Dāūd's hesitation, Akbar took possession of the Hājīpur fort by a sudden move and at the same time attacked Patna. A force of 3,000 men was sent over, and Rājā Gajapatī, zamīndār of Hājīpur, was ordered to support the troops. The rebels were

defeated; Fateh Khān Bārha, the commander of the fort, was slain, with many of his soldiers; and their heads were sent to Dāūd as a grim and significant warning. Five days afterwards Daud fled to Bengal and Orissa, where he was defeated and finally obliged to conclude peace.

There are few buildings to commemorate the former power of the Muhammadans, but the names of the different *mahalas* or wards have clearly a Moslem character. For example Khataktolī, Lodīpur, Yusafpur, etc., distinctly point to the Khatak-Lodī, and Yusafzai clans of Afghāns living in them; while Muftī Mahala bears evidence to the large number of Kāzīs, or Muftīs, necessary for the administration of the religious law. Similarly, the suburban wards of Maniyārpur (inhabited by those who set stones and carved on metals), Jawāhīr Tolā (inhabited by jewellers), Chhīpī Tolā (inhabited by those who stamped patterns on cloth, etc.) bear witness to the former wealth and fashion of Hājīpur. The grave of Hājī Ilyās himself is still pointed out to the south-east of the Gandak Bridge, and is held in great veneration by both the Musalmān and Hindu inhabitants of the town. It is visited by large numbers of pilgrims from the district, especially women, who, it is said, obtain the fulfilment of their wishes by propitiating the saint, and come in crowds with votive offerings. A large gathering, or *melā*, is also held near the tomb annually, in January, presumably on the anniversary of the Hājī's death.

The remains of the old fort stand close by on high ground lying along the bank of the Gandak; and inside the enclosure is an old mosque, the Jama Masjid, which an inscription over the stone gateway shows to have been built in 1587 by Māksus Shāh. Tradition says that over each doorway there was an inscription in a different language; that in Arabic over the front doorway is now much defaced and almost illegible; that mentioned above, which is in Hindī but in the Persian character, is curious, because it contains allusions to Hindu gods. The mosque is crowned with three rounded domes, the centre one being the largest. They are built of horizontally-placed rows of stones, each row forming a circle, and each circle being more contracted than the one immediately below it, until the keystone is reached, which is circular. It is built almost entirely of Hindu materials, and apparently stands on an old Hindu site, for the stones still retain their old cramp-holes and even some portions of the iron cramps. There is also a *sarai* or rest-house within the limits of the fort, which was built about 60 years ago for the accommodation of the late Sir Jang Bahādur on the occasion of

his visits from Nepāl. This *sarai* encloses a Buddhist temple, a double-storied building with some carvings of an indecent character on the wood-work. It is surmounted by a gilt bell, which gives it a picturesque appearance. There are no other buildings calling for mention, except the temple of Rām Chandra to the west of the town, a building of no architectural pretensions, which is noteworthy only because of the tradition that Rāma stayed here when on his way to Janakpur. Two sites, named Rāmchura and Rāmbhadr, are said to mark the places where he stopped on his journey northwards. [*See* also Reports A. S. I., Vol. XVI, and an article 'On some names of places in Behar,' by Mr. John Christian, Calcutta Review, January 1891.]

Hazrat Jandahā.—A village in the Hājīpur subdivision, 20 miles east of Hājīpur and 9 miles north of Mehnār. It is a local mart of some importance, the principal article of commerce being tobacco. The name of the place is derived from a curious legend, of which the following account is taken from an article "On some names of places in Behar," by Mr. John Christian, Calcutta Review, Vol. XCII, 1891. The revered Musalmān saint, whose tomb is still pointed out at Hazrat Jandahā, and who gave the name to the place and the river that flows past it, was known as Dīwān Shāh Alī. It is said that one hot summer day he felt very thirsty, and asked a by-stander to fetch him some water. The man was rude enough to reply that there was no water to be had close by; whereupon the Shāh got very angry, and in his anger called on the waters to flow that way, saying *Biah* (Persian), "come." Immediately, a river began to approach the place, cutting away the intervening land and causing devastation and ruin to thousands of villages as it advanced. This so terrified the neighbouring people that they came in a body and implored the Shāh to have pity on them and cause the river to spare their lands. He then called out *Jandah*, "do not drown," and the river stopped encroaching and began to flow quietly in its present channel. Thus the river was called Bayā and the town Jandahā. Why the venerated saint should have invoked the river in Persian and forbidden its approach in Bihāri is not explained. This Dīwān Shāh Alī was himself the subject of a miracle, performed on him in his infancy by his uncle, who was equally remarkable for his miraculous powers. His name was Makhdum Shāh Abul Fateh, and he lived in Hājīpur, where his tomb is still pointed out. It is said that, on one occasion, during one of his fits of ecstasy, which lasted for long periods, he threw his nephew, Shāh Alī, who was only six days old, into the river Gandak, calling on the river saint, Khwāja Khizr, to

educate him and take care of him; that after six years, when he had recovered from his ecstatic mood, his mother told him what he had done, and what a grievous injury he had caused to his brother and sister-in-law, who had never ceased bewailing the loss of their only child. Thereupon Makhdum Shāh told her not to grieve, and, going to the river, said: "Khwāja Khizr, give me back my nephew, whom I committed to your care six years ago." On this, the river began to roll, and out came the boy, robed and jewelled like a prince. Though young, he was thoroughly conversant with all the religious laws, and afterwards became the famous Hazrat Shāh Alī from whom Hazrat Jandahā got its name.

Jaintpur.— A village in the head-quarters subdivision situated 6½ miles north-east of Pāro and 16 miles west of Muzaffarpur. The village contains a large *math* or Hindu monastery, the head (*Mahanth*) of which is one of the largest land-owners in Tirhut. The Mahanths of Jaintpur are Bairāgis, who are forbidden to marry, and succession passes to the head disciple. The nucleus of the estate was a *mukarari* of Rāmpur Balli granted by the zamīndārs of Sain, near Kantī, to their *guru* Tirbhuan Sain Lāl Dās. The *guru* speedily began to acquire other property, including the extensive Tājpur *tāluka*, and his growing riches nearly cost him his life. Tradition relates that on one occasion, when he went to Sain with a large sum of money, his disciples secretly determined to make away with him and possess themselves of his wealth. One of the Sain ladies informed Lāl Dās of the plot that had been hatched against him, whereupon he fled towards Hājīpur, neither halting nor eating day and night. On approaching Hājīpur, a voice called to him from the tall grass by the roadside. He paid no heed at first, but the voice continued to call, and always from a direction in advance of him. At length, he enquired impatiently, "Who calls me from the grass?" Thereupon, the voice complained that he had not been worshipped and fed on the previous day. Lāl Dās, searching in the grass, found the idol of Damodarjī, the family deity whom he had hitherto worshipped regularly, and took it up and conveyed it to Patna, where he founded a temple for its worship. The temple stands to this day, and some villages of the Jaintpur estate are set apart for its endowment.

Jaurī-dih.—A name, meaning the burnt village, given to a large mound in the village of Bithauli, 3 miles south of Bhagwānpur railway station, situated close to the main road from Muzaffarpur to Hājīpur, on the 23rd mile from the former and 12th mile from the latter place. The legend of the Jaurī-dih is that there was a fort and town of the Chero Rājās at this spot

long anterior to the Muhammadan conquest; that the country around belonged to the Dosādh people; and that it was still held by them under their own low-caste kings, even after the Brāhmans had lived among them and taught them. Finally, an enemy appeared from the west, and the Chero chief, sallied forth to battle, leaving word with the people in the fort that if they saw his standard remain erect, they would know he was victorious, but that, if they saw it fall, they would know that he was beaten and were then to set fire to the castle in order to escape falling into the hands of the enemy. The standard-bearer, however, let his flag fall when the battle was over, and the garrison of the fort and the women, thinking their chief was dead and the battle lost, shut themselves into the castle, which was three-storied, and set fire to it. The chief, on his return, found his castle burning, and in despair flung himself into the flames and died. It is stated that, after the destruction of the tower, the place lapsed into thick jungle for a long time, but that, after the surrounding country had been cleared by the forefathers of the present occupants, a Brāhman built a small temple at the site of the *pīpal* tree now standing at the north-east corner of the mound; no vestige of this temple is now to be seen. Even 100 years ago wild pig used to frequent the mound, which is now quite bare of jungle. Excavations were carried out here in 1880-81, and the walls of the fort were laid bare and found to have a circumference of 3,000 yards. Among the debris bronze statues of various deities, fragments of sculpture in blue stone, pieces of used metal ore, a calcined gold ring, fragments of votive horses in baked clay, etc., were discovered. Two of the bronze statues had inscriptions showing that they were made during the reign of Mahīpāḷa Deva. *See* Reports Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. XVI, pp. 84—88.

Kānti.—A village in the head-quarters subdivision, situated 8 miles west of Muzaffarpur on the road leading from that place to Motīhāri at the point of junction with the road to Sītāmarhi. There is a station on the Tirhut section of the Bengal and North-Western Railway a little to the south of the village; and it is a trade centre of some local importance, at which a market is held twice a week. It is one of the largest villages in the district, having a population of 5,217, and it contains a large indigo concern and the remains of an old saltpetre factory.

Katrā (also called Akbarpur).—A village in the head-quarters subdivision, situated on the west of the Lakhandai river, 18 miles north-west of Muzaffarpur. Population 2,308. It contains a police station, situated on the ruins of an old mud fort strewn

with bricks towards the west of the village. This fort covers about 60 *bighas* of land; the walls are about 30 feet high, and the interior is partly cultivated. There is a local legend that it was built by one Rājā Chānd, who, when going to Darbhangā, told his family that if they heard that his flag in that place had fallen down, they might know he was dead. One of his enemies, a Kurmī, tore it down, and the news coming to Katrā, the Rājā's family immediately made a funeral pyre and threw themselves on it. This legend closely resembles that already mentioned in the account of Jaurī-dih.

Lālganj.—A town in the Hājīpur subdivision, situated on the east bank of the Gandak, 12 miles north-west of Hājīpur town, in 25° 52′ N. and 85° 10′ E. Population (1901) 11,502. Lālganj is an important river mart, the principal exports being hides, oil-seeds and saltpetre, and the imports food-grains (chiefly rice), salt and piece-goods. The bazar lies on the low land adjoining the river, but is protected from inundation by the Gandak embankments. The shipping *ghāt*, called Basanta, lies a mile to the south of the town, which is connected by road with Sāhibganj, Muzaffarpur and Hājīpur.

A little to the south of the town is the Singiā indigo factory, situated close to the embankment. Singiā was the site of the first English factory in Bihār, which was established in the latter half of the 17th century for the sake of the trade in saltpetre. This factory is frequently mentioned in the early records of the East India Company. There was also a settlement of the Dutch East India Company, which was similarly started for the manufacture of saltpetre. In 1791 it was put up for sale by order of the Hon'ble Isaac Jitzsingh, member of the Supreme Council of Batavia and Director at Hooghly, and of Antoine de Maffe and John George Van Ambungla, members of the Hon'ble Court of Judicature, Hooghly, and was bought by a Bengali merchant for Rs. 100. The latter resold it in 1795 to Mr. John Collis for Rs. 435. In 1801 it again changed hands, passing to Mr. James Nasmyth for Rs. 750, and it was then used for the manufacture of saltpetre. The protection of this factory from flood appears to have been the motive for constructing the Gandak embankment; and so important was its preservation considered that a special Embankment Committee was formed for the purpose in 1809.

Majorganj (also called Mallai and Hala Khaura).—A village in the north-west of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, situated close to the frontier on the main road from Maniāri-ghāt to Sonbarsā. It contains a police outpost, and was the site of a British cantonment

during the Nepāl war. The small cemetery here contains the graves of Captain Blackney, who was killed in an outpost action at Parsarām Thāpā's post on the 1st January 1815, and of Colonel Kelly, who served at Waterloo, was Aide-de-camp to Lord Combermere at the siege of Bharatpur, and died here in 1828.

Maniāri.—A village in the head-quarters subdivision, 8 miles south of Muzaffarpur. There is a station on the railway line, and the village contains a large Hindu *math* or monastery. A fair is held here on the Sivarātri festival in February.

Mānikchak.—A village in the Sītāmarhi subdivision situated about 27 miles north of Muzaffarpur. It is one of the largest villages in the district, its population in 1901 being returned as 7,739.

Mehnār.—A village in the Hājīpur subdivision situated 20 miles south-east of Hājīpur, a short distance north of the Ganges on the road from Hājīpur to Mohi-ud-dīnnagar. Population (1901) 5,006. It contains a police outpost, a distillery under the jurisdiction of the Subdivisional Officer of Hājīpur, and a large bazar, at which a considerable trade is carried on in linseed, food-grains and saltpetre.

Mithilā.—The ancient name for the tract of country bounded on the north by the Himālayas, on the east by the river Kosi, on the south by the Ganges, and on the west by the Gandak. It comprised the present districts of Champāran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā, parts of the districts of Monghyr, Bhāgalpur and Purnea, and the strip of Nepāl *tarai* lying between those districts and the lower ranges of the Himālayas.

Muzaffarpur subdivision.—Head-quarters subdivision of the district, lying between 25° 54′ and 26° 26′ N., and 84° 53′ and 85° 45′ E., and extending over 1,221 square miles. Its population was 1,050,027 in 1901 against 1,074,382 in 1891. The slight decline in the population is partly due to the Muzaffarpur thāna having suffered from cholera epidemics, and partly to the fact that it supplies a large number of emigrant labourers to Lower Bengal. The *doāb* between the Bāghmati and the Little Gandak is moreover liable to frequent inundations. The subdivision contains one town, Muzaffarpur its head-quarters, and 1,712 villages; and it is divided into three thānas or police circles—Muzaffarpur, Katrā and Pāro. Of the total number of inhabitants, 91[illegible],950 are Hindus, 129,460 are Muhammadans and 602 are Christians. The density of the population is 860 persons to the square mile; the average number of villages and houses per square mile is 1·4 and 170 respectively; and the average population of each village is 587.

Muzaffarpur town.—Chief town and administrative head-quarters of the district, situated on the south bank of the Little Gandak in 26° 7′ N. and 85° 24′ E. The population which was 38,223 in 1872 increased to 42,460 in 1881 and to 49,192 in 1891, but fell to 45,617 in 1901, of whom 31,623 were Hindus and 13,492 Muhammadans. The decrease on the last occasion, which amounted to 9 per cent., is to a great extent only apparent; and but for the exclusion of one of the old wards from the municipal limits, and the temporary absence of a larger number of people in connection with marriage ceremonies, the town would probably have returned at least as many inhabitants as in 1891. Roads radiate in all directions from the town to Hājīpur, Lālganj, Rewā Ghāt, Sohānsi Ghāt, Motīhāri, Sītāmarhi and on to Nepāl, Puprī, Kamtaul, Darbhangā, Pūsa and Dalsingh Sarai. A considerable trade is carried by the Little Gandak, which river, if slightly improved, would admit boats of 500 maunds or 20 tons burden all the year round.

The town is a comparatively modern one, being founded in the 18th century by one Muzaffar Khān, an *āmil* or farmer of the Chakla Nai *pargana*, who appropriated for the purpose 75 *bīghas* from the four villages of Sikandrapur to the north, Kanhauli on the east, Saiyadpur on the south and Saraiyāganj on the west, and called the town after his own name. In 1817 it contained 667 houses; and it now occupies portions of 15 villages and contains about 5,000 houses. It has an area of about 6 square miles, its average length from north-west to south-east being 2½ miles and its breadth 2 miles. It is charmingly situated on comparatively high land on the south bank of two large lakes, called the Sikandrapur lake and the Akhāraghāt lake. These lakes originally formed the bed of the Little Gandak river, which now flows about half a mile north of the town. The bazar, which is large and somewhat picturesque, is situated on the south bank of the Akhāraghāt lake, while the circuit-house, a large house belonging to the Mahārājā of Darbhangā, and some of the finest houses in the station are built on the shores of the Sikandrapur lake; to the north of this lake again lies a fine *maidān*. To prevent the river from making its way into the town, an embankment has been thrown across the lake towards Daūdpur. The river has not yet been able to force its way into the lake, but it has cut deeply into the high bank near the circuit-house, and unless it changes its course, it may in time break through the strip of land which at present separates it from the lake, in spite of the protective works which have been erected. The natural flow of the drainage of the town is in an easterly direction, but

nearly the whole of the drainage of the bazar, which is the most thickly populated portion of the town, flows into an old nullah connected at one end with a tank situated in low-lying land, and at the other with the Akhāraghāt lake. The European residents obtain their supply of drinking-water from the Little Gandak; the water is rendered tolerably pure by means of filtration; and the European population do not seem to suffer in any way from its use. The majority of the natives, however, will not use the river water for drinking purposes, because they believe that it causes goitre, and obtain their supply from wells.

The town is clean, and the streets in many cases broad and well kept, running principally from east to west. It contains, in addition to the usual public buildings, a large new hospital, a dispensary, several schools, some of the best of which are supported by the Bihār Scientific Society and the Dharma Samāj, and a college teaching up to the B. A. standard, which was established in 1899 through the generosity of a local zamīndār. The building is large, and the college is at present in a flourishing condition. The principal religious buildings are two large temples in the centre of the bazar, dedicated one to Rāma and Sīta and the other to Siva. To the east of the court compound there is a public garden, which was opened in 1883 in commemoration of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. It is kept up by the municipality, but is not much used.

Muzaffarpur is the head-quarters of the volunteer corps known as the Bihār Light Horse. This corps was raised in 1862, when 53 planters of Tirhut forwarded a memorial to the Government of Bengal asking to be allowed to form a mounted volunteer corps. It has always enjoyed a high reputation for efficiency; in 1886 it offered to send a detachment on service in the Soudan for the relief of General Gordon; and more recently it sent a detachment to the South African war, which formed part of Lumsden's Horse. The strength of the corps is 291; of these about two-thirds are planters, and the remainder are in Government service. It draws its members from all over Bihār, and has detachments at Motīhāri, Chāpra, Samāstipur, Bankipore and Bhāgalpur.

Nānpur.—A village near the eastern boundary of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, situated on the main road from Muzaffarpur to Puprī, 31 miles distant from the former and 4 miles south-east of the latter place. It contains the residence of one of the richest zamīndārs of the district. Two traditional accounts of the origin of the Nānpur estate have been handed down, both associated with Nānpai, an inhabitant of the Punjab, who was master of the Emperor's horse. On the Emperor's favourite charger falling ill,

the doctors recommended that it should be sent to Tirhut for a change of air, and Nānpai with a few attendants was entrusted with this duty. Nānpai saw that the country east of the Bāghmati river was very fertile, and set about its reclamation. In about two years he had founded a small zamīndāri, which he called after his own name. On Nānpai sending back the charger, without returning himself, the Emperor was angered and sent men to bring him. Nānpai gave them a splendid reception, made complete submission, and wrote back that he was acquiring property for the Emperor himself. The Emperor, being appeased by this reply, made over to Nānpai the whole of the *pargana*. The other story is that, on the Emperor going to hunt in Nepāl, a tiger was met, which Nānpai killed single-handed with his sword. The Emperor, as a reward for his bravery, gave him the *pargana* round Nānpur. Thereupon, Nānpai established himself at Nānpur and excavated a big tank, which he called Bāgh Pokhar in commemoration of this event. There is to this day a *tolā* or hamlet of Nānpur called Bāgh-tolā, and the foundations of Nānpai's house are still pointed out. Both traditions agree that about 2 centuries ago Nānpai cleared and settled the tract east of the Bāghmati and north of the village of Turkī Khararu, which was then unbroken jungle inhabited only by a few settlers from the *Tarai*.

On Nānpai's death two Pathāns, Muhammad Alī Khān and Sher Alī Khān, took forcible possession of his property. The Emperor, on hearing this, sent Mādho Rām as *tahsīldār* on his behalf to collect rents from them. Meanwhile, they had established themselves firmly, and two villages were called after their names, viz., Sherpur or Avapur and Muhammadpur. They soon found the presence of Mādho Rām irksome, and slew him at Avapur, where the mound within which his ashes were buried can still be seen. But their prosperity was short-lived, for when the British became supreme, Gulāb Singh, the heir of Mādho Rām, complained to the Government. Prompt action was taken; the Khāns fled to Nepāl; and Gulāb Singh was placed in possession of the property.

Padmaul.—A village in the southern border of the head-quarters subdivision, situated 11 miles south of Muzaffarpur. Markets are held twice a week, but the place is best known for the bullocks sold there. It was the residence of a kānungo in the time of the Mughal Emperors, who built a little fortress for himself and, it is said, was permitted to keep some cannon in it. The ruins of the fortress are still visible.

Parsauni.—A village in the Sītāmarhi subdivision, situated 9 miles south-west of Sitāmarhi on the road from that place to

Sheohar, and 5 miles north-west of Belsand. Parsauni is the head-quarters of the Parsauni Rāj, which was founded in the 17th century by a military adventurer named Pardil Singh. Tradition relates that a barber chief, who ruled over Mahsaur, Chandauli, Kansar and other villages, having refused to pay revenue to the Muhammadan *āmil* of Hājīpur, the latter sent a force against him. The barber resisted it and came off victorious ; and the *āmil* sent news of his defeat to Delhi. Pardil Singh, an officer of the army, was present when the tale was told to the Emperor, and on hearing it, laughed aloud. The Emperor ordered him to be slain for this want of respect, but on the Kāzi interceding, enquired the cause of his laughter. Pardil Singh very humbly replied : "If an *āmil* cannot control a barber what can he do? If so ordered, I will bring in the barber's head." Thereupon, the Emperor commuted the sentence of death to conversion to Islām, and Pardil Singh became Pardil Khān. Pardil, to fulfil his promise, started for Tirhut with a large number of attendants, and halted at Turkī, then a wild untraversed jungle, waiting for a favourable opportunity. Eventually, one day, when the barber was engaged in the *srāddha* or funeral ceremonies of his mother, Pardil attacked him, cut off his head, and sent it to the Emperor. As a reward, he was created Rājā Pardil Khān in 1615, and was the founder of the Parsauni Rāj. He was given a grant of the jungle wherein he had lain in wait for the barber, and his followers reclaimed it. He died in 1686 A. D., and was buried at Saraiyā, close to Belsand, where his grave may still be seen. One of his descendants, Basāwan Khān, attached a large portion of the Nepāl *tarai*, and paid the East India Company over half a lakh of rupees as revenue for the Turkī *pargana*. During the time of his son, Ghulām Murtazā Khān, the boundary between Nepāl and British India was demarcated, resulting in a loss to him of 1,400 villages which, it was decided, lay in Nepāl. It is said that compensation was offered, but refused, the Rājā being content with the promise that if these villages subsequently came into British territory, the claims of his descendants would be considered. Ghulām was succeeded by his brother, Banai, who moved to Parsauni, when the family residence at Turkī was washed away.

Sāhibganj.—A village in the north-western corner of the head-quarters subdivision, situated on the river Bayā, 35 miles north-west of Muzaffarpur and 4 miles east of the Gandak. It has a local reputation for the manufacture of shoes, and, with roads passing through it to Motīhāri, Lālganj and Motīpur, it is an important trade centre. The chief exports are oil-seeds, wheat,

pulse and salt, for which the Gandak affords an easy means of transport. The indigo factory of Karnaul is situated a little to the south of the village.

Sheohar.—A village and thāna situated in the south-west of the Sītāmarhi subdivision, 16 miles to the south-west of Sītāmarhi and 3 miles north of the Bāghmati river. The village gives its name to the Sheohar Rāj, one of the oldest and most influential families in the district. The founder of the family was one Ugra Sen Singh, a military adventurer, who acquired possession of *Sarkār* Champāran in the 17th century. His direct successors ruled up to two years before the grant of the *Dīwāni* to the East India Company in 1765, but the last of them, having died without male issue, was succeeded by his daughter's son, Rājā Jugal Keshwar Singh. He fell into arrears of revenue, and in the words of the Judges of the Dīwāni Adālat, "rebelled and fought with the forces of the British Government, was defeated and fled to Bundelkhand for safety, and his Rajgi was seized upon and brought under the direct management of the Company." But the Company found its revenue grew less and less; and accordingly in May 1771, the Patna Council, by conciliatory overtures to Jugal Keshwar Singh, persuaded him to return to the Company's territories. In the following June the Council made a partition of the *Sarkār*, giving the *parganas* of Majhāwa and Simrāon to him, and those of Mehsi and Babra to Srīkishan and Abdhut Singh, the grandsons of Gaj Singh, for their support. The two last *parganas* constituted the original property of the Sheohar Rāj.

Singiā.—*See* the article on Lālganj.

Sītāmarhi subdivision.—Northern subdivision of the district, lying between 26° 16′ and 26° 53′ N., and 85° 11′ and 85° 50′ E., and extending over 1,016 square miles. Its population was 986,582 in 1901 against 924,396 in 1891. In spite of the fact that it is particularly liable to suffer from famine and bore the brunt of the distress in 1896-97, this is the most progressive part of the district, and its population has been growing steadily since the first census in 1872; it attracts settlers both from Nepāl and from the south of the district. The subdivision is divided into 4 police circles—Sītāmarhi, Belsand, Puprī and Sheohar; and it contains one town, Sītāmarhi, its head-quarters, and 996 villages, one of which, Bairagniā, is the terminus of a branch of the Bengal and North-Western Railway, and an important market for the frontier trade with Nepāl. Of the total number of inhabitants, 842,280 are Hindus, 144,250 are Muhammadans, and 52 are Christians. The density of the population, which

is as high as 971 per square mile, is greater than in any other subdivision. The average number of villages and houses per square mile is 1 and 173 respectively, and the average population of each village is 981.

Sītāmarhi town.—Head-quarters town of the subdivision of the same name, situated in 26° 35′ N. and 85° 29′ E., on the west bank of the Lakhandai river, which is here spanned by a fine brick bridge. Population (1901) 9,538. The town is situated on a branch of the Tirhut State Railway, and is also connected by road with the Nepāl frontier, Darbhangā and Muzaffarpur. The town has a large trade in rice, *sakhwā* wood, oil-seeds, hides and Nepāl produce. A large fair, celebrating the Rāmnavamī, *i.e.*, the day of Rāma's birth, is held here in Chait (March-April). It lasts a fortnight and is attended by people from very great distances. Pottery, spices, brass utensils and cotton cloth form the staple articles of commerce; but the fair is especially noted for the large quantity of bullocks brought to it, the Sītāmarhi cattle being a well-known breed.

Sītāmarhi is a sacred place in Hindu mythology, as tradition relates that here Sīta sprang to life out of an earthen pot, into which King Janaka drove his ploughshare. The tank, called the Jānakī-kund, from which she is said to have arisen, is still pointed out, but Panaurā, a village 3 miles to the south-west, also claims the honour. The town contains no buildings of any archæological interest. The temple of Jānakī, *i.e.*, Sīta, the daughter of Janaka, is apparently modern and not more than 70 or 80 years old; it contains three stone figures with mother-of-pearl eyes which represent Rāma, Sīta and Lakshmana. The legend connected with the temple shows however that it occupies an old site. It is said that Janaka excavated a tank at the place where Sīta sprang to life, and after her marriage set up the figures of Rāma, Sīta and Lakshmana to mark the site: this tank is the Jānakī-kund just to the south of the temple. In course of time, the land lapsed into jungle, till about 500 years ago, when a Hindu ascetic, named Bīrbal Dās, learnt by divine inspiration of the site where Sīta was born, and, coming from Ajodhyā, cleared the jungle. Here he found the images set up by Janaka, and having built a temple over them, commenced the worship of Jānakī. The income of the temple, which is large, is derived mainly from the offerings of pilgrims, but the Mahanth, who is responsible for its preservation, also enjoys the revenues of an endowment, called the *tāluka* Sītāmarhi, which was set aside for its maintenance. In the same compound there are three other temples sacred to Hanumân, Mahādeo and Ganesh, which

are quite modern; and to the south stands a mausoleum erected over the ashes of the first three Mahanths, Bīrbal Dās and his two successors.

Subhegarh (or Subahigarh).—An old ruined fort, 18 miles to the north-west of Muzaffarpur, situated in a bend of the Joga river, an old branch of the Bāghmati, which surrounds it on all sides. The fort is 1,300 feet long by 400 feet, and the walls were originally of brick, but have fallen down long ago. Near the middle of the fort there is a high mound with some remains of walls, which, according to local tradition, marks the site of the residence of Rājā Suhel De. This Rājā, it is said, was the last of his race, and had only one daughter Suhel Devī or Subahi Devī who rejected all her suitors, and at last only consented to marry a man who should be able to count the myriads of palm trees in the fort. This seemingly impossible task was accomplished by a Dosādh of the neighbouring village of Sukari or Suari-dih (*i.e.*, the pigs' village); and the princess, overcome with shame at the thought of being married to a man of such low caste, prayed that the earth would open and swallow her up. Her prayer was heard, and the earth at once opened under her.

The only remains of sculpture in the fort consist of a broken pedestal of stone with some small figures carved on it; the statue itself was probably broken by the Muhammadans, when they first occupied the fort. The site is an old one, to judge from the large size of the bricks which once formed its walls and from its happy position on the bend of the Joga river. General Cunningham found two copper coins of Tughlak Shāh at Subhegarh, and as that Emperor is known to have passed through Tirhut on his way to Bengal in 1323, he considers that the destruction of the fort must be attributed to him. At a short distance to the south there are two Muhammadan domed tombs, some 75 years old, called the tombs of Ghulām Mohi-ud-dīn and Muhammad Jabbar, and still further to the south there is a third tomb with a small *īdgāh*. *See* Reports Arch. Surv. India., Vol. XVI, pp. 30-31.

Sursand.—A village and police outpost in the Sītāmarhi subdivision, situated 15 miles east of Sītāmarhi. It is the largest village in the district, containing a population of 9,356. The name of the place is said to be derived from Sur Sen, a chieftain who once lived there. After his death, it lapsed once more into jungle, until it was reclaimed by two brothers—Mahesh Jhā and Amar Jhā, the founders of the present Sursand family. These brothers, the story runs, left their home at Ghograha, in the district of Darbhangā, and came to settle at Jadupati, a village

belonging to them, 8 miles from Sursand. One day Mahesh Jhā went with his astrologer to hunt in the woods at Sursand, and came across the ruins of Sur Sen's fort. The astrologer having told him that the man who made a home there would be a Rājā, Mahesh Jhā acted on his advice and cleared the jungle. The several branches of the Sursand family sprang from his son, Chaudhri Kelwal Krishna. Amar Jhā's branch did not prosper, and his descendants are impoverished. Chaudhri Hirdai Narāyan, a descendant of the elder branch, added largely to the family estates by methods which were short and summary. In one case a zamīndār of Riga having refused to sell some land he wanted, Hirdai Narāyan had him seized, brought to Sursand, and hung head downwards from the terrace. This method of persuasion proving ineffectual, Hirdai Narāyan kept him in confinement, and meanwhile got a deed executed in his own favour by false personation. He showed his moderation, however, in fixing the term for his own life only, and on his death the land reverted to the Riga zamīndār. The Sursand Rājās are often mentioned in official reports for their liberality. At present the proprietors are all women.

Tirhut.—The ancient name for the tract of country bounded on the north by the Himālayas, on the south by the Ganges, on the west by the river Gandak and on the east by the river Kosi. It comprised the British districts of Champāran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā, as well as the strip of Nepāl *tarai* which runs between these districts and the lower ranges of the Himālayas. The name is a corruption of Tīrabhukti, or the river-side land; and General Cunningham* considers that the term referred to the lands lying in the valleys of the Little Gandak and Bāghmati rivers. He points out that all the chief places in the country are found upon the banks of the former river, which, he says, must have been the channel of the Great Gandak until the 7th century A. D. Mahāmahopādhyāya Hara Prasād Sāstri informs me, however, that, in his opinion, the term means the province bordering on the Ganges, and that the word *bhukti* is often used in the Sena inscriptions in the sense of province during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries. He considers that the term is not very ancient, and conjectures that it was first used when the Sena Kings of Bengal conquered the country and settled a number of Bengali Brāhmans in it. According to tradition, it means the land in which the three great mythical *homas* (sacrificial fires) were performed—one at the birth of Sīta in or near Sītāmarhi,

* Reports Arch. Surv. Ind., Vol. XVI.

the second at Dhanukha at the foot of the Himālayas, when the great celestial bow of Hara was broken by Rāma, and the third at Janakpur, the capital of Mithilā (now in Nepāl) at the marriage of Sīta.

Under the Mughal Empire Tirhut formed a *sarkār* or division of the *Sūbah* or province of Bihār. It comprised a very large tract of country, being bounded on the north by the Nepāl territory, on the south by *Sarkārs* Hājīpur and Monghyr, and on the east by *Sarkārs* Monghyr and Purnea. In other words, it included the present districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā (except the southern portion, which was included in *Sarkār* Hājīpur), nearly the whole of Bhāgalpur, and a small portion of Monghyr. In the early days of British administration, it formed a huge district, covering the present districts of Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā, a large part of Bhāgalpur, *pargana* Kashmār in the south-east corner of Sāran, and *pargana* Bhadi Bhusari in the south-western corner of Monghyr. The head-quarters of this district remained at Muzaffarpur, but various transfers of territory were made until the area of Tirhut coincided with that of Muzaffarpur and Darbhangā. It was divided into two in 1875, the eastern and larger portion being formed into the district of Darbhangā, and the western portion being constituted the district of Muzaffarpur.

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